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General Assembly

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Official Records

19th Meeting
Wednesday, 5 October 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 112

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/49/400/Add.2)

The President *(interpretation from French):* In a letter contained in document A/49/400/Add.2 the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 20 and 26 September, Burkina Faso has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Address by Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Central African Republic, His Excellency Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Patasse *(interpretation from French):* The delegation of the new Central African Republic, which is attending a session of the General Assembly for the first time, is pleased to be here and expresses to you, Mr. President, and all other representatives, its warmest greetings and the best wishes of the Government and people of the Central African Republic.

It is with pride that my delegation sees you, Mr. President, guiding the General Assembly's proceedings at its forty-ninth session. Your well-deserved election, which honours all of Africa, is a tribute to your country, Côte d'Ivoire, with which the Central African Republic enjoys excellent relations of friendship, fraternity and cooperation.

Since 1994 has been called the year of Africa, my delegation and I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of the late President Houphouët-Boigny.

We welcome the presence in this Hall of the sister Republic of South Africa, and we congratulate it on the arrival of democracy there.

It is with genuine pleasure that my Government congratulates the President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally, and commends him for the competent and intelligent way in which he discharged his mandate.

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We also congratulate the Secretary-General, a worthy son of Africa, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who, as head of the Organization, made the preparations for the year of Africa. His admirable dynamism, realism, patience and wisdom have effectively helped to contain many international problems, despite meagre resources. We wish to reiterate our firm support for him and our best wishes for every success in his multifaceted initiatives for peace, security and development.

In the wake of the Second World War the United Nations was created as a successor to the League of Nations. It set itself the objective of, *inter alia*, settling of disputes in order to promote the economic, social and cultural development of nations.

What has happened since that time? The world was divided into two camps — one capitalist, the other communist — while in between the two the third-world countries described as non-aligned gradually achieved international sovereignty. This situation led to the advent of regimes born of military *coups d'état* in almost all the countries of the third world, especially in Africa. Those military regimes, which were anti-democratic because they were not elected, seized power and held freedom hostage, thereby curtailing the economic, social and cultural development of our nations. They plunged their populations into unprecedented impoverishment.

While the international community and the wealthy countries indulged and fostered this policy of domination, waste, corruption and mismanagement, the colonized and dominated populations fought unceasingly for access to democracy, the basis of all development. At last, near the end of 1990, the populations' cries of alarm were heard by the international community, which then quickly facilitated the third world's access to democracy.

A new era dawned, starting in the East, where communism crumbled. The wind from the East blew through the African continent, where exhausted and traumatized populations accepted unprecedented sacrifices and waged a ruthless battle against the military regimes in power.

Certain African countries opted for the formula of sovereign national conferences, while others chose free, democratic and transparent elections. The Central African people resolutely chose the latter path, at all cost.

In this context, the Central African Republic, which I represent today at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, elected me President, Head of State of the Republic, in a setting of serenity and transparency, and over eight other candidates who enjoyed broad support from abroad. This was a victory not only for me and my Party but also for the entire Central African people. It was a victory won through change in favour of a new and truly democratic Republic.

I take this opportunity to thank earnestly, once again, the friendly countries and international institutions that participated unfailingly in the process of democratizing the Central African Republic. I would like to mention in particular France, the United States of America, Germany, Japan, the Republic of China in Taiwan, the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Central African Republic would like to base its hopes on the concrete decisions that the General Assembly will be taking to eradicate the last remaining hotbeds of tension in the world at large and in Africa in particular.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Liberia and other countries must find peace again, as did South Africa — and we welcome the presence here of South Africa's hero: the illustrious, democratically elected President, His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, beacon of the struggle against apartheid and for a new, multi-racial and fraternal South Africa.

In this context, firmly convinced of the importance of humanitarian action in Rwanda, we supported unhesitatingly the helpful intervention of France, whose courage and determination we extol. That intervention curbed human suffering and restored peace to Rwanda.

I also take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of my country, congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Bill Clinton, President of the United States of America, and to the American people for their intervention in Haiti aimed at restoring democracy and returning the democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to office.

At its forty-ninth session the General Assembly must take concrete and urgent measures to prevent and contain conflicts by establishing and strengthening legal instruments. For weapons have never provided any lasting solutions. It is only if these legal instruments are established that the so-called poor countries will be able to begin to lay the foundations of their economic, social

and cultural development in peace and tranquillity and that the intervention of the international community and the wealthy countries will be only complementary.

As to the Central African Republic, since my election on 27 September 1993, we have endeavoured to lay the groundwork for real democracy by giving priority to dialogue and concord between all the sectors of the Central African nation.

A truly democratic constitution, which reflects the profound aspirations of my people, is being drafted and will soon be submitted to a referendum, in December 1994. This constitution, which is the result of a broad consensus, places great emphasis on justice, on fundamental freedoms, and on social and family well-being achieved through work.

It applies the mechanism of decentralization, along with its corollary, regionalization in order, on the one hand, to bring the people closer while, on the other, to mobilize all available local resources for the agro-industrial processing of raw materials and mineral resources, for our subsoil is very rich, so as to improve the standard of living in the countryside and the provinces.

How will the Central African Republic, a land-locked country, accomplish such a programme if its neighbours, the countries of its subregion, are not at peace? A good portion of our exported and imported goods pass through neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and Congo. Furthermore, at the domestic level, the work of our peaceful peasants is systematically undermined by a phenomenon known as "zaraguinas", or those who block the road. These "zaraguinas" are simply a reflection of the political and military situation of our neighbours.

The General Assembly will understand why the Central African Republic agreed to act as mediator between the Government of Chad and a politico-military group with a view to restoring peace to that fraternal country in its northern sector. This is because peace in Chad, in Cameroon, in Congo, in Sudan and in Zaire will allow the Central African Republic to develop harmoniously, promoting a dynamic and fruitful policy of good-neighbourliness and of the complementarity we require.

My country has embarked on the path of mediation between the parties in Chad because it believes in the virtues of dialogue and harmony in a spirit of tolerance and unity within a diversity of political opinions.

Today, the agreement reached between the Government of Chad and the National Salvation Council for Peace and Democracy in Chad (CSNPDT) of Moise Kette Nodji is entering the stage of implementation in the field, thanks to the follow-up committee of Bangui II, since this Kette movement, which in the past was a politico-military movement, has now basically become a political party of a conventional type, which is officially recognized.

The Government of Chad, on the initiative of the mediator, has just announced an amnesty for the combatants of the CSNPDT in order to rebuild confidence among all Chadians and to create conditions conducive to genuine reconciliation within Chad before the forthcoming elections in the country.

We are also prepared to make our contribution to the settlement of internal conflicts in those neighbouring countries that have appealed to us for assistance.

I have elaborated on the major problems of concern to my country, the Central African Republic, and also those of neighbouring countries as concerns lasting peace in Central Africa and in the world at large, and the Assembly will understand that I am deeply committed to respect for human rights and for the rule of law. I am a free man, and I say what I believe. I tell the truth, because the truth makes one free. I am a biologist, and I know that a good metabolism requires both macro-elements and oligo-elements.

Therefore, it is impossible to claim respect for human rights and for the rights of nations if, in one way or another, we promote discrimination for whatever reason.

In the past, it was discrimination between the East and West blocs, whose consequences, in the form of the cold war, plunged a large part of mankind into a catastrophic situation. In the past, it was discrimination between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. In the past, it was racial discrimination in South Africa. Today, we still see discrimination: between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China in Taiwan.

And yet, the Berlin Wall has fallen, as did the walls of Jericho in days gone by, marking the end of the East-West bloc system. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has yielded to coexistence between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine. The criminal

foundations of apartheid have crumbled and given way to a new, democratic South Africa with a human face.

Why not today help the two Chinas to overcome their temporary divergences, which arise out of past history, in order that China might be reconciled with itself in the higher interests of the Chinese people and of the peoples that are friends of the two Chinas? Why exclude the Republic of China in Taiwan from the great family of the international community? Why reject a State that has 21 million inhabitants? Where is our respect for them? Why encourage the conflict between the Chinas, when we know that the two exchange technologies and complement each other?

For my part, and on behalf of the Central African Republic, I reaffirm that we intend to maintain diplomatic, economic, cultural and social relations with the two Chinese States without restriction. The choice resides solely with the People's Republic of China or the Republic of China in Taiwan.

The same applies to the two Koreas, because we want to benefit from the technology of all these friendly countries for our development. Towards this end, we base ourselves on the fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter: there are no large nations; there are no small nations.

That is why my country, a co-sponsor of the draft resolution on the "Consideration of the exceptional situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan in the international context, based on the principle of universality and in accordance with the established model of parallel representation of divided countries at the United Nations", deeply regrets that this item was not placed on the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The race towards the great market of the People's Republic of China should not obscure the problems of discrimination that exist between the Chinese peoples. I am still convinced that patience and wisdom will prevail one day, as they have recently in many of the countries we mentioned earlier.

Our Organization will soon celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. It is appropriate at this time to draw up the balance-sheet for this half-century and conduct a real assessment in order to set general policy guidelines for the years to come. Loyal to our policy of decentralization in Central Africa, we would also propose that the Assembly be decentralized at the level of each continent, and that it hold its sessions in New York only every two or three years, in accordance with a mechanism to be established after a study by experts. In this way, the other bodies of the United Nations system would also be brought closer to the peoples of the different continents.

As regards the Security Council, Africa has achieved maturity, and, with one third of the world's population, is entitled to a permanent seat and also to the right of veto. This is the proposal for adaptation to present circumstance that we draw to the Assembly's attention.

Before concluding my statement, I should like to remind to General Assembly that the late Barthélemy Boganda, founding President of the Central African Republic, had a prophetic vision of the development of the African continent. He proposed regrouping States into political and economic entities, with a view to launching the economy of the African countries at the subregional and regional levels. The guiding idea was to establish the United States of Africa. Unfortunately, those ideas, which were put forward at such an early date by the late Barthélemy Boganda, were not well understood by his peers and therefore were systematically fought and discarded. The individual countries, out of national chauvinism and egoism, chose to make their own way.

Today, Africa has regressed. It is absent at the international level as regards trade and industrial and agro-industrial development. And yet Africa has a wealth of all kinds of raw materials. Why have our economies become so fragile? Why have our education and training systems not attained their objectives — true technical, scientific and socio-professional instruction, the essential basis for a real policy of reconstruction in our countries, which are in an unprecedented state of dilapidation? Why do our health-care systems no longer meet the aspirations of our populations? Why are our roads in such a state of disrepair that it is virtually impossible to travel freely from one country to another? In a word, why must we start all over?

All this has happened because of different ideologies, based on the selfish interests of individual nations. It is also due to a lack of active solidarity among African nations.

Contrary to other regions of the world, where there are clear signs of the resumption of economic growth, the persistence of poor economic results in Africa remains a source of concern and of constant disquiet. In fact, at

the present time, Africa accounts for under 2 per cent of international trade transactions. It is being crushed under the weight of debt, and various programmes for structural adjustment have done nothing to change the worsening standard of living of the entire continent, which does, however, have an enormous potential in its peoples and its nature.

The trend towards a decline in the prices of raw materials and commodities is continuing inexorably, and the transfer of technology is proceeding in an unsatisfactory manner, placing Africa on the sidelines. What we need to save the continent is a real Marshall Plan, because at the present time multilateral and bilateral assistance remain insufficient to promote sustained and lasting growth.

Without this growth, which is necessary to raise the African people's standard of living, lasting peace can be only an illusion. In a word, the Central African Republic appeals for international solidarity in favour of the poorest countries, with a view to the relaunching of their development.

In this context, my country expresses the hope that this session will mark a new stage in effective cooperation for progress and peace in the entire international community.

The Central African Republic believes that tolerance and peace for development must henceforward be the motto of the United Nations.

Long live the General Assembly!

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Central African Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ange-Félix Patasse, President of the Central African Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 ***(continued)***

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The next speaker is the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Choi Su Hon.

Mr. Choi Su Hon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) *(spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Mr. President, allow me first of all, on behalf of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to convey to you our congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We hope that under your presidency the General Assembly will bring its work to a fruitful conclusion.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the activities and efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to strengthen the United Nations and enhance its responsibility and its role.

Before I begin my statement, allow me also to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, to the Secretariat of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system for the deep condolences they expressed on the demise of our respected leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung, former President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

May I also take this opportunity to extend our profound thanks to the Heads of State or Government, to the Governments and to the peoples of different countries for their messages of deep condolence and consolation as well as for their arrangement of services of mourning for our great leader.

Our respected President Kim Il Sung devoted his efforts, throughout his life, to ensuring the prosperity of our motherland and to the freedom and happiness of its people and to world peace and the progress of humanity. Our leader's passing is a very great loss and profound grief for our nation. He performed immortal exploits, which will go down in the annals of history through his tireless and energetic activities from his early years to the advanced age of over 80. Although the heart of our leader has ceased to beat, his great exploits will be remembered for ever. Our great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung will always be with us.

Despite the greatest loss that our nation has suffered in its five-thousand-year-long history, our people have been able to turn their grief and sorrow into strength and courage and they have been able to rise up again, because they have another great leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, who has inherited the ideology, the qualities of leadership and the lofty virtues of our paternal leader.

Our dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il is the supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Supreme Commander of its revolutionary armed forces. A man of literary and military accomplishments, of loyalty and filial piety, a man perfectly endowed with the qualities and traits of leadership, Comrade Kim Jong Il enjoys the greatest respect and the absolute confidence of our people, who have entrusted him with their destiny and their future.

Our society is characterized by the close unity between the leader and the people in a socialist system centred upon the popular masses, a system which they have chosen and which they have built on their own.

Our dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il remains committed to his life-long mission of carrying forward and accomplishing the revolutionary cause pioneered by our fatherly leader through generations and he is energetically leading the overall affairs of our party, State and armed forces. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is firmly committed to fully carrying forward and further building on the accomplishments of the respected leader President Kim Il Sung, and the lifetime teachings of the leader remain the guideline for our activities. Our people will follow the wise leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il, more firmly as they arm themselves with the Juche idea, the revolutionary idea of the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, and defend, safeguard and glorify our socialism, which is their life and soul.

The lifelong desire of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung was the reunification of our country, and he worked energetically until the last minute of his life for its realization. National reunification is the patriotic cause related to the destiny of our nation and it is the supreme task of our nation and one that can be delayed no longer.

It is indeed an intolerable tragedy that the division of our nation that began in the 1940s has lasted until today, at a time when humanity is preparing to usher in the twenty-first century.

The Government and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, being desirous of national reunification, have long been exerting every effort to achieve reunification on the basis of the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and national unity; the proposal for the establishment of a confederal State; and the Ten-Point Programme for Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the country's reunification, serves as the common reunification programme of the nation.

As there exist different ideologies and political systems in the north and the south of Korea, the establishment of a confederation based on the concept of one nation and one State, two systems and two governments, is the only way to achieve reunification on the basis of the principle of neither side conquering or being conquered by the other. This is the cardinal principle for reunification that corresponds to current reality existing in the Korean peninsula.

The major stumbling-blocks to humanitarian exchanges, dialogue and contacts between the north and south are South Korea's so-called "National Security Law", which defines fellow countrymen as enemies, and the concrete wall, a symbol of division and confrontation. All the legal and physical barriers must be removed at an early date if we are to achieve our consistent goals of free travel and contacts, cooperation and exchanges between the north and the south and if we are to realize national unity. This is not only the unanimous demand of the entire Korean people and the world's peoples but also the trend of the times.

Our nation is firm in its will and intention to achieve national reunification in the 1990s. Our people will certainly open the door to national reunification by achieving the unity of all Korean nationals in the north and the south and abroad on the basis of national patriotism and a spirit of national independence, thereby promoting coexistence, co-prosperity and common interests, dispelling the fears of northward invasion and southward invasion and the fears of prevalence over communism and of communization and by working together to establish an independent, peaceful, neutral, reunified State transcending the differences in doctrines and views.

An important point in defusing the tensions and bringing about peace on the Korean peninsula is to replace the Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement and to establish a new peace arrangement to replace the current armistice mechanism. The Korean Armistice Agreement is a provisional step that envisages the suspension of any military actions between the belligerent parties and its subsequent conversion into a peace agreement.

The Armistice Agreement states, in paragraph 60 of article IV, that, in order to help establish a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, a political conference of both sides should be held at a higher level. However, such a

political conference has yet to be convened and the unstable armistice has lasted so far.

Over the last four decades or so the Korean Armistice Agreement and the armistice mechanism have proved to be nominal and insubstantial, failing to prevent or restrain arms reinforcement from outside Korea, a military build-up and large-scale military exercises. Moreover, it is anomalous in every way that the Armistice Agreement signed in the 1950s should remain intact, even today when the cold war is over. These facts highlight the urgent need to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement and the existing armistice mechanism with a peace arrangement.

In April this year the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a detailed proposal to the United States that the two countries should begin negotiations on an arrangement for a lasting peace to replace the outdated armistice system. It subsequently took the practical step of opening the representative office of the Korean People's Army in Panmunjom as our new negotiating body. In late August this year the Chinese Government announced its decision to withdraw the delegation of the Chinese People's Volunteers to the Military Armistice Commission, in view of the urgent need to substitute a new peace arrangement for the Korean Armistice Agreement, and in consideration of the current status of the malfunctioning Military Armistice Commission.

These measures were taken as innovative, goodwill steps to make a breakthrough in establishing a new security arrangement on the Korean peninsula, taking into consideration the recognized international practices under which some countries terminated their belligerency after the Second World War and declared peaceful relationships.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea still remains, in legal terms, in a state of belligerency with the United Nations, of which it is a dignified Member State. That is because the cease-fire has lasted so long. At its thirtieth session the General Assembly, in 1975, adopted resolution 3390 B (XXX), urging the dismantling of the United Nations Command and the replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement, but that resolution has not yet been implemented. The United Nations should give due attention to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proposal for the establishment of a new peace arrangement and fulfil in good faith its own obligations in this regard, thus making amends for its unsavoury past *vis-à-vis* the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a Member State of the United Nations, and implementing its own resolution.

Another very important element in defusing tensions and establishing lasting peace on the Korean peninsula would be a fundamental resolution of the nuclear issue. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is a political and military issue to be resolved bilaterally by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, in view of its origin and its nature and substance. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has maintained its firm position that the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula should be resolved through dialogue and negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. Thanks to the sincere and patient efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have held several rounds of bilateral talks, leading to the recent Agreed Statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, both of which are now working towards its implementation. This shows that if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States work together to resolve the issue with trust in each other, and on the principle of impartiality and equality, they will bring about a good and fruitful outcome.

To demonstrate the transparency of our nuclear activities, we took the bold decision to replace the existing system of graphite-moderated reactors with a system of light water reactors, at the sacrifice of our independent atomic power industry. However, certain forces, which are not happy with a possible resolution of the nuclear issue, are still resorting to pressure and threats against us, while peddling arguments about so-called special inspections — arguments that are highly provocative to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and have had a negative effect on the talks between it and the United States. This is nothing but an attempt on the part of these forces to wreck the talks by any possible means as they enter a new stage, and to make the situation on the Korean peninsula an extremely strained.

The Korean people are strongly independence-minded, and independence means life for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No threat or blackmail, no pressure or sanctions, will ever work on us. Our people will never beg for peace at the expense of our national dignity and sovereignty simply out of fear of war, and

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never sell out its supreme interests under pressure.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is one to be resolved by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and no other party is entitled to intervene in this bilateral process. Intervention by any other party in their talks will only create difficulties and complications, and erect obstacles to the resolution of the issue, rather than help in its resolution in any way.

Before the South Korean authorities talk about the "nuclear issue", they should refrain from creating obstacles to the progress of the talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, from encouraging confrontation between North and South and from aggravating the situation on the Korean peninsula.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have now set out on the path of dialogue and negotiations and are moving towards implementing their agreements on the final objectives of the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue and other outstanding issues. The world welcomes this process and looks forward to satisfactory results. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue all its sincere efforts to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and to achieve the region's denuclearization. I would like to take this opportunity to express our profound thanks to State leaders, Governments and peoples for their support and encouragement for the principled position and sincere efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resolve the nuclear issue.

Humankind now has the shared task of building a new, free and peaceful world, free from domination and subjugation. In order to build the new world which humanity wants to see, we must eliminate, once and for all, the legacies of the discredited cold-war era and realize the democratization of international society so as to enable all countries and nations to exercise their sovereign rights on an equal basis in international forums.

The most important element in this respect is the democratization of the United Nations. Among the Member States of the United Nations, there are, of course, big and small countries, and there are also old Member States and new Member States. However, there cannot be any senior countries or junior countries, and there cannot be any dominating countries or countries to be dominated by others. All United Nations Member States are equal Members of the United Nations, and all contribute jointly to world peace and security.

There can be no place for individual Member States to hold privileged positions within the United Nations. Certain forces still try at international forums to trample international justice and the principle of impartiality underfoot. They are attempting to openly apply a double standard in dealing with the nuclear issue, human rights, terrorism and a number of other issues. They are bringing unreasonable pressure to bear upon those countries that they consider to be offending them, making slanders and false charges concerning the "nuclear threat", "human rights violations" and "terrorist States", while they simply wink at the wrongful actions of those countries considered to be obedient to their directives. These phenomena still continue undiminished.

This is a clear indication that there still remain outdated concepts and the mentality of the cold-war era, when the strong-arm actions and high-handed behaviour of a few countries were allowed to go unchallenged. Such unfair and unreasonable acts and behaviour should no longer be allowed any place in international relations.

Restructuring of the United Nations is important, in order to meet more actively the changed reality and new challenges.

The non-aligned and other developing countries make up a majority of United Nations membership. For a fair and proper representation of their demands and interests in the resolution of major international issues, there is every reason why developing countries should become permanent members of the Security Council.

We believe that, despite any need for enlarged membership of the Security Council, no permanent member seat should be given to any country that has still failed to wipe the slate clean with regard to its past as a nation defeated in the Second World War. Japan is now seeking permanent membership in the Security Council. It must first make a full and unambiguous apology, and provide compensation, for its past aggression and war crimes. This would be the proper behaviour for Japan.

Disarmament — nuclear disarmament in particular — is another task that must be undertaken urgently. People throughout the Earth have long wanted to live in a peaceful world free from nuclear weapons, and they have been calling for the complete abolition of such weapons. However, the nuclear-weapon States are

reluctant to scrap their nuclear arsenals totally, even in the current post-cold-war era. They still seek to perpetuate their monopoly in nuclear weaponry and to justify legally the continued possession of these weapons. This is anachronistic thinking, which only spurs the nuclear-arms race and blocks progress in meaningful discussions on general disarmament.

The extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is now a matter of worldwide interest and concern. The existing Treaty defines the rights and obligations of the nuclear-weapon States and of the non-nuclear-weapon States respectively on an unequal basis. If this Treaty is to be fair it should contain unconditional negative security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States; a commitment by each nuclear-weapon State not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; provision for a total ban on the use of these weapons; and a timetable for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. These would be the first steps towards rendering meaningless the existence of nuclear weapons on our planet.

We are witnessing the disturbance of peace and security in some regions of the globe. No small number of countries are suffering severe calamities. It is indeed heartbreaking to see how national sovereignty is trampled underfoot and how regional conflicts and religious and ethnic conflicts continue unabated, only to escalate into wars. It is our view that disputes between countries and nations should be resolved through peaceful negotiations between the parties concerned, in the interests of those parties and for the sake of world peace.

Social and economic development is an important matter directly related to international peace and security. It is common knowledge that social and economic development has been greatly hindered, and the worldwide phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer is becoming even more intense. A fair and just international economic order should be established to free the people of the developing countries from famine, disease and disasters and to narrow the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries.

The United Nations should give priority to the development of the developing countries and strengthen its own role in their economic and social development. We hope that the Agenda for Development proposed by the Secretary-General will make a substantial contribution to the economic development of these countries.

The summits of non-aligned countries and other world conferences have emphasized the need for the establishment of a new, fair international order and have adopted resolutions calling for practical measures to this end. The non-aligned and other developing countries are working hard to achieve South-South cooperation and to establish the South-South economic order, starting in the fields of food and agriculture, education and health, which are priority areas in the drive to accelerate social and economic development and to shake off economic poverty.

The developed countries should pay due attention to this matter. They should move to resume dialogue with the developing countries and to join in establishing a fair international economic order, and should refrain from any actions that would hinder the economic development of the developing countries.

People in many countries are currently engaged in a vigorous struggle to reject all foreign domination and interference, to defend national independence and sovereignty and to achieve national stability and prosperity.

We express our solidarity with the Cambodian people, whose cause is the promotion of national reconciliation and unity and the country's post-war rehabilitation. We fully support the peoples of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in their efforts to secure peace in their respective countries and common prosperity, and all other Asian peoples in their efforts to build a new, independent and prosperous Asia.

We support the struggle of the Arab people for a fair and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian question and other Middle East problems, and we support Libya's efforts to secure a peaceful resolution of the Lockerbie crisis through dialogue and negotiations, as well as the Arab League's proposal in this regard.

We are gratified by the establishment of the multiracial, democratic Government in South Africa following the eradication of racist rule, and we support the African peoples in their struggle to achieve the independent development of their respective countries despite their socio-economic difficulties.

We express our firm solidarity with the just cause of the Cuban people, who are resolutely defending the sovereignty of their country and the gains of socialism,

and with the struggle of the Latin American peoples for peace and prosperity in their countries.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people will continue their full support for and firm solidarity with all the peoples in the world in their struggle to oppose all forms of domination and subjugation, to build a new society and to promote the common cause of mankind.

Independence, peace and friendship have been the constant cornerstone of the foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The concept of independence, peace and friendship as the cornerstone of our foreign policy, established by our respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung during his lifetime, reflects the unanimous desire and aspiration of our people and of peoples throughout the Earth to build a new, independent, peaceful and friendly world. It is the principle by which the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in its external activities, is constantly guided.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to join with the world's peoples who are seeking independence, will strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation and will undertake in good faith its own duties in the interests of the common cause of mankind - the safeguarding of a just world peace and security and the building of a new, independent and prosperous world.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will work sincerely with other delegations for success in the discussion of the items on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Mr. Obed Asamoah.

Mr. Asamoah (Ghana): On behalf of the Ghana delegation, I have the honour and pleasure of conveying to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election, by acclamation, as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election is an honour not only to you personally but also to your country, Côte d'Ivoire, with which Ghana shares a common destiny and, happily, enjoys very warm, cordial and special relations. You will no doubt be equal to the task, given your disposition and your record of distinguished service to your Government and country and to the international community.

Allow me also to place on record our appreciation of the effective leadership that your predecessor as President, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, provided for the Organization during his stewardship. His ability to navigate the General Assembly through the difficult discussions on the restructuring and revitalization of the Organization — particularly those on the reform of the Security Council — and the skill that he demonstrated during the world hearings on the proposed Agenda for Development are indelible marks of his stewardship.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has continued to remain on top of his very challenging and delicate task as the chief executive of the Organization. His abilities and skills as a thinker, administrator and accomplished diplomat have been assets to the United Nations. The dedication and commitment of his staff have been equally noteworthy.

In discharging its primary responsibility to promote international peace and security the United Nations has had successes and disappointments. Exploitation of the inherent weaknesses of the Charter, lack of good faith greed and the quest for domination characterized the era of the cold war which, happily, appears to be coming to an end. However, conflicts that threaten international peace and security exist and are multiplying; some are legacies of the cold war and others the result of the failure of the international community to create the economic and social conditions for international peace and security. Other contributing factors include inordinate personal ambition, ethnicity, nationalism, religious intolerance and political adventurism.

Thanks to the end of the cold war, the political landscape in Europe has changed and has impacted positively, if only with partial success, on Cambodia, Mozambique and, most important of all, the Middle East. The Angolan problem appears to be nearing a solution. At long last, UNITA is getting the message that the international community abhors its commitment to militarism and appreciates the political maturity and spirit of compromise of the Angolan Government. Although certain cold-war-era conflicts such as Cyprus, Korea and Afghanistan are proving difficult to solve, one must take comfort in the fact that the Koreas are agreed on the basis of reunification of their country and that, after decades of conflict and anxiety, South Africa is now a non-racial, democratic country. We take this opportunity to welcome its delegation into our midst. The contribution of the United Nations in the solution of these

conflicts is immense, but one must also recognize that no progress would have been possible without the exemplary statesmanship of the leaders involved in their solution.

The end of the cold war, coupled with the strains of nation-building, have produced new threats to peace in parts of the former Soviet Union, in Yugoslavia and in Africa. Horror stories have emerged from Bosnia, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia. Some of the problems seem to have no immediate prospect of solution. Somalia and Liberia are coming close to being written off as Afghanistan has been. To an increasing degree regional organizations and small States like Ghana are being called upon to bear the burden of securing a peaceful world, a burden far above their means. In such situations success depends largely upon support from the more endowed members of the international community, either through the United Nations or on a direct bilateral basis.

In Liberia, Ghana and a few other countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are groaning under the burden of helping the Liberians maintain a nation. In Rwanda, in the heat of battle Ghana and Canada were left alone to grapple with a horror situation without adequate material support. Even after the international community was shamed into action, logistic support has not been particularly prompt or adequate.

Ghana takes pride in its peace-keeping role. From the Congo crisis in the early 1960s up until now it has demonstrated the will and readiness to come to the help of nations in distress. We are willing to continue to discharge our responsibilities if adequate material support can be forthcoming from the international community, particularly, its wealthy members. Given the unwillingness of many nations to get involved in conflicts far from their shores and in respect of which their national interests are not manifest to their electorate, the option for the international community is to support countries such as Ghana and regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to defend the ideals of the United Nations.

With President Rawlings's assumption of the chairmanship of ECOWAS Ghana is directly face to face with the ambitions, rivalries, prejudices, misconceptions and lack of common purpose even within ECOWAS and with the misrepresentations that have made the solution of this problem elusive. We must pay a tribute to our predecessors as Chairmen of ECOWAS who have had to grapple with the problem. We have recently gathered the warring factions in Akosombo to push the peace process forward. We have taken note of the misconceptions and attempts to undermine this latest effort. However, with persistence, patience, firmness and transparency, we hope we can make significant progress in the coming year. What we ask of the Liberians is sincerity and the spirit of compromise. From the international community, we will appreciate moral, material and diplomatic support and an understanding of the complexities of the problem.

Peace-keeping is crowding the international agenda to such a degree that we seem to be losing our ability to focus on the unfinished business of disarmament. The proliferation of conflicts generates insecurity and compounds the disarmament problem. Both problems, however, must be resolved simultaneously. The process of eliminating nuclear weapons needs to be speeded up to make the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) an attractive proposition for non-nuclear Powers. Bilateral efforts at disarmament, such as those under way between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, need to be situated in the general context of multilateral diplomacy.

It is no accident that conflicts abound in the developing world and the economically backward areas of Europe. At the root of all these conflict situations and the threats to peace and security are economic deprivation and abject poverty. It is not necessary to restate the gruesome statistics of the conditions of the poor — the high mortality rates, the malnutrition, the inadequate health facilities, ignorance and poor housing. These conditions are compounded by a seriously inequitable system of international trade with its attendant problems, including the debt burden. Unequal access to knowledge, technology and resources has accentuated the already unacceptable socio-economic inequalities both within and among nations.

The issue of external debt is primary in its constraining effects on economic growth in Africa. The vast majority of lower-income countries which owe debts totalling $1.3 trillion are in sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-saharan Africa alone is overburdened with debt servicing to the tune of $200 billion representing 10 per cent of the total national income of the 43 countries involved. It is not sheer coincidence that Africa plays host to a sizeable number of United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The scale of Africa's debt and the effect it has produced in our economies requires action by the

international community. The international accord embodied in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, which contains a strategy to relaunch African economies on the path of growth and recovery, has hardly had any noticeable effect a year after its adoption. The international community is yet to discharge its obligations under the international accord. No agreement has been reached on the modalities for the creation of a diversification fund for Africa as called for by the various studies initiated by well-known bodies of the United Nations. This is regrettable.

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was no doubt a historic achievement. It holds prospects of opening up possibilities of trade liberalization and long-term growth. It is, however, equally true — and probably more significant — to note that trade is possible only after production. A lot of factors constrain the ability and capacity of developing countries, particularly in Africa, to take advantage of international arrangements such as those concluded under the Uruguay Round.

Because of our conviction that the underlying socio-economic factors of the threat to peace and security should be seriously addressed by the international community, the Government of Ghana strongly supports the holding of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 6-12 March 1995. However, it should not be an occasion for an attempt to impose a set of social values on the international community, nor should it be an opportunity to malign the cultural practices of any group of people. It should be an occasion for mutual understanding to pave the way for a charter for social progress.

Ghana also attaches great importance to the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled to take place in Beijing in September 1995, as part of the process of furthering peace and security. We recognize the increasingly evident correlation between the advancement of women and economic development and social stability. We hope the Conference will help accelerate the removal of obstacles to women's full and equal participation in all spheres of life and enable them to play an active role in the global restructuring of economic, political, social and cultural relations as we approach the twenty-first century.

The increased responsibilities of the United Nations in peace-keeping, the expansion of the Organization and the demise of the Soviet Union as a super-Power have highlighted the need for the Organization's restructuring. In this exercise we must keep two things in mind. We must not undermine the validity of the basic principles of the Organization, such as the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. Not even the current preoccupation with democracy and human rights should be allowed to erode these principles any more than is absolutely essential. And we must avoid allowing the Security Council to become the instrument for the foreign policy objectives of certain Powers. We must fight neo-colonialist tendencies exemplified in the economic blockade of Cuba and the questionable imposition of sanctions against the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. There is no basis in international law for these actions, which result in misery for the ordinary people of these countries and restrain intercourse between nations. Reasonable proposals for an end to these problems have been made which we hope will find general acceptance.

The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, needs to be restructured in order to reduce the vulnerability of small nations to big-Power pressure and to reflect their increased roles, particularly in the area of peace-keeping, as well as the realities of power today. The increased role of the United Nations in peace-keeping has called for the establishment of machinery within the Secretariat to improve efficiency. In response to the proposal contained in the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace", the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted a number of measures and decisions which should enhance the Organization's ability to maintain international peace and security. However, a lot of work remains to be done. We hope that by its fiftieth anniversary the United Nations will be sufficiently reformed and revitalized to command universal respect and cooperation.

In the final analysis, however, resources — financial and otherwise — will determine the effectiveness of the Organization. The financial situation of the Organization remains a source of concern. Members of the Organization should redouble their efforts to ensure its solvency so that the Secretary-General can effectively implement the mandates of the legislative bodies.

The Members, for their part, expect prudence and discipline in the application of the resources made available to the Organization. The consolidation of the internal oversight mechanisms into the Office of Internal Oversight Services, together with the existing external

oversight mechanisms, should help reduce waste and ensure accountability.

Ghana reiterates its belief in the unity of the purposes of the Charter and wishes to stress the need for the Organization to address global development issues with the same vigour as that with which it has approached the issues of global peace and security. It is the hope and expectation of Ghana that this forty-ninth session will mark the beginning of the renaissance of the United Nations, ready to demonstrate, more in action than in words, its determination to maintain peace and promote prosperity on the basis of justice, law and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the Minister for External Relations of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Ferdinand Léopold Oyono.

Mr. Oyono (Cameroon) *(interpretation from French):* Over and above the usual civilities, Sir, the very sincere and warm congratulations of the Cameroon delegation on your election to preside over the current session of the General Assembly are addressed to you both as an able diplomat and as a worthy representative of Côte d'Ivoire, a country that is a friend of ours and with which we are honoured to have longstanding relations of fraternal cooperation. On behalf of the delegation of Cameroon, I wish you every success in the exercise of your important functions.

Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, your predecessor, successfully reflected and expressed our concerns when presiding over the forty-eighth session. We should like to express our deep appreciation to him.

Since his election our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has placed all his courage, energy and determination at the service of our Organization to promote peace, justice and progress in an increasingly difficult climate. Cameroon would once again like to assure him of its firm and constant support.

Despite the uncertainties, upheavals and crises we are experiencing in the evolving international environment, several major events since the last session give grounds for satisfaction and hope.

The emergence of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa, under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, has sounded the death knell of the apartheid era, now a thing of the past, while marking the advent of a new era on our continent. South Africa can now get down to its economic and social development with increased vigour.

Cameroon, which was at the forefront of the struggle against the scourge of apartheid, once again solemnly welcomes South Africa's return into the concert of nations. The credit for this happy return goes to the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the forces of progress in the world for their combined efforts, but mainly to the South African people and leaders themselves, in particular Nelson Mandela and Frederik de Klerk, who have always distinguished themselves by the breadth of their vision, their courage and their determination.

Echoing the new era beginning in Pretoria, an important stage has just been reached in the long process leading to the normalization of relations between Israel and the Palestinians on the one hand, and between Israel and its other Arab neighbours on the other hand.

The advent of Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, pursuant to the agreements concluded, and the significant progress in the negotiations between the Jewish State and Jordan are significant advances towards a just and lasting settlement of the question of the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We must encourage this promising, but still fragile, development and give it all the necessary attention and determination.

The judicial settlement of the conflict between Chad and Libya over the Aouzu Strip, which has finally come into being following lengthy negotiations, deserves to be welcomed with satisfaction, particularly since it constitutes a model for others to follow.

By bringing the question of the border and territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its machinery for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts, to the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to the International Court of Justice, which is charged with the peaceful and judicial settlement of conflicts, it was the intention of Cameroon to subscribe fully to the virtues of preventive diplomacy.

It is an established fact that, like non-aggression pacts and mutual assistance pacts, preventive diplomacy

is an interesting innovation and one that may well prevent new conflicts and suffering, and even reverse the tendency towards confrontation and war which is so characteristic of our continent.

For this reason, preventive diplomacy should be encouraged and supported by the international community. For its part, my country would like to thank all those who have supported it in regard to the Bakassi affair. The means of action and the machinery of diplomacy at the disposal of the OAU and the United Nations should be further strengthened.

The positive developments in South Africa and the Middle East coincide, unfortunately, with the persistence or the eruption of hotbeds of tension throughout the world. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Cyprus, in Afghanistan, as well as in Cambodia, peace is still threatened. It is threatened even further on our continent, a fact to which the tragedy of Rwanda bears witness.

This is an opportunity to renew an urgent appeal to our brothers in Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Mozambique, as well as in other countries beset by tension, conflict and warfare, to rise above their various differences so that they may be able to make the necessary efforts to meet the challenge of peace.

The persistence of these conflicts and hotbeds of tension, so harmful in their consequences, compels us to initiate and resolutely and vigorously pursue any action conducive to peace, security and the building of confidence, which are so necessary in the struggle against poverty and destitution.

Within States we should, for instance, promote tolerance, respect for the rights of others, participation by all in the affairs of the country, and fair distribution of the fruits of growth.

In relations between States, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States must be respected, while at the same time this should not be an obstacle to mutual cooperation in the event of natural disasters and calamities that require humanitarian intervention.

The creation by the African Heads of State of the OAU machinery to which I have referred, and the initialling by the States of central Africa of a non-aggression pact in September 1994, are among the efforts we have been making to promote good-neighbourly relations based on confidence and free from any threat of the use of force.

Although at the outset this machinery has already achieved some excellent results, nevertheless, like the Standing Consultative Committee on Questions of Security in Central Africa that was created by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the context of preventive diplomacy, it needs the support of the international community.

In the final analysis, these regional initiatives to promote confidence-building measures and progressive disarmament should, on the global level, be encouraged in order to achieve the objectives of the international community with respect to disarmament, peace and security.

Thus, we welcome the respect being shown for the moratorium on nuclear testing, as well as the progress achieved in negotiations between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the North Korean nuclear programme. We encourage both countries to find a peaceful solution to that dispute.

Regarding the current negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, Cameroon joins the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in expressing the hope that this convention will be signed before the Amendment Conference in 1995.

Finally, whether we speak of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, toxic waste, mine clearance or anti-personnel mines, Cameroon also wishes to see the international community working towards general and complete disarmament.

In his report entitled "Agenda for Development" (A/48/935), the Secretary-General noted very aptly that peace was the foundation of development; that the economy was the engine of progress; that the environment was the basis of sustainability; that justice was the pillar of society, and that democracy represented good governance.

These preliminary reflections deserve great attention, since the "Agenda for Development" is a follow-up to the "Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). It reaffirms, furthermore, that economic, social and cultural development is a fundamental right of the human being.

Furthermore, global talks on development, which were held in New York in June 1994 on the initiative and under the presidency of Ambassador Insanally, the high-level debate and the recent session of the Economic and Social Council on the "Agenda for Development", the Ministerial Declaration that followed the commemorative ceremonies for the thirtieth anniversary of the Group of 77 and the substantive session of Economic and Social Council indicate that development is a complex phenomenon, requiring constant effort on the part of States and of the international community as a whole.

It is therefore our hope, that on the basis of the priorities identified during these meetings, the measures required to deal with these issues will be considered by the General Assembly on the basis of a new report by the Secretary-General.

The urgent need to set in motion a new United Nations programme for the development of Africa in the 1990s should be stressed. The timeliness and relevance of such a step was reaffirmed by the international conference on the development of Africa held in Tokyo. The African economy, as we know, is essentially based on primary commodities. Any strategy for the sustainable development of the continent must consequently take into account the need for diversification. We would like to reiterate the appeal we made last year from this same rostrum for the creation of a fund for diversification of commodities for Africa.

In a different context — and this cannot be repeated too often — debt is a major obstacle to development. The debt of developing countries has steadily increased, rising from $1.662 billion in 1992 to $1.770 billion in 1993. We welcome the efforts made so far to relieve or reschedule debt for developing countries. However, a great deal still remains to be done, as is emphasized in the 1994 edition of the Human Development Report.

Drought and desertification are another subject of major concern. We welcome the fact that negotiations were successfully concluded last June in Paris to draw up an international convention on drought and desertification, a matter of undoubted importance for the world ecosystem and, more specifically, for the implementation of Agenda 21 in Africa.

If the conclusion of multilateral economic negotiations in the context of the Uruguay Round provides further prospects for a dynamic revitalization of international trade, it is important that steps be taken in parallel to reverse the pronounced trend towards the marginalization and the impoverishment of Africa, which could be promoted by the new machinery established at Marrakesh.

Human rights are universal and indivisible, and we must therefore attach equal importance to economic, political, cultural and social rights. Whether in terms of the rights of women, children, youth, the disabled, the aged or other vulnerable groups, the human being must remain the central focus of the international community's concerns. We should welcome the Plan of Action adopted at the recent International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, for it takes account of that requirement. The Plan of Action does not focus on mankind as an abstract entity, but on human beings rooted in their economic, social, cultural and religious diversities, all of which need to be kept in mind.

That is why the forthcoming Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development ought to result in specific commitments to reduce poverty, to create productive jobs and to strengthen social integration, particularly among the most vulnerable strata of society.

The same concerns are reflected in the importance we attach to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held at Beijing in 1995.

It is in the interest of us all to pursue collective, unified action to struggle against the harmful effects of drugs, the spread of the AIDS pandemic, and natural catastrophes, if necessary combining emergency humanitarian assistance with measures for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the stricken countries.

In another area, the entry into force next November of the Montego Bay convention — the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea — next November is a particularly encouraging development setting the seal on the universality of that important legal instrument. We hope that it will promote exploitation of the seas and oceans for the benefit of all.

As we near the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, our wish is that the Organization will meet the challenge of reform and renewal. Whether it be the revitalization of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, the enlargement and strengthening of the Security Council, the rationalization of activities and procedures or the consolidation of the Organization's financial basis,

Member States should strive to mould an institution worthy of the vision and the inspiration of its founding fathers.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Salem Basendwah.

Mr. Basendwah (Yemen) *(interpretation from Arabic):* At the outset, Sir, please allow me, on behalf of my country, my delegation and speaking for myself, to join previous speakers in most warmly congratulating you and, through you, your country on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your excellent qualifications, extensive experience, wisdom and detailed knowledge of international affairs, give us confidence in that you will guide the deliberations at this session to successful conclusions.

I should like to take this opportunity also to express our gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Samuel Insanally, for the important role he played in the forty-eighth session and for his tireless activity throughout it. Similarly, fairness compels us to express our admiration and great appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his invaluable and unremitting efforts since he took up his post, to increase the importance of the United Nations, make it more effective and maximize its ability to carry out its duties properly, and thereby to increase the confidence of mankind in general, and every nation in particular, in the credibility of this Organization's commitment to the purposes and principles of its Charter. Foremost among those is the maintenance of peace and security on the basis of justice and equality. It is our hope that he will continue to play his role with the same enthusiasm and high-mindedness.

Having studied the annual report on the work of the Organization, which we have all received, we can say it is comprehensive and accurate. The Secretary-General deserves our gratitude and appreciation for the outstanding effort he has put into drawing up that report, and in presenting it in such a satisfactory form. However, we should like to make some remarks on the references made in the report with regard to Yemen.

As members are aware, our country, the Republic of Yemen, was earlier this year exposed to bloody sedition as a result of a dangerous conspiracy on the part of a handful of treacherous mercenary elements who chose to isolate themselves from the rest of their fellow countrymen, to rebel against legitimate institutions, overturn constitutional legality and trample on the Constitution, law and order, with the aim of destroying the unity of the country, burying it alive and aborting our experiment in democracy based on political and party pluralism, which was successful despite the shortness of the period during which it has been in place.

First, I should like to point out that history shows that throughout the ages our country, Yemen, has always been a single political unit, with the exception of a few periods of varying lengths during which it was subjected to division or segmentation. Sometimes this was the result of a power struggle, and sometimes the result of total or partial occupation by one or more foreign powers. However, it was never long before Yemen regained its unity at the hands of its own people, who never lost sight of the fact that they are a single Muslim, Arab, Yemeni people, and never forgot for one moment that they belonged to one nation. Throughout the earlier decades of this century, wherein our people struggled against the dictatorial rule of the Imam in the North and British colonialism in the South, the unity of Yemen was the loftiest ideal of our people and its dearest national aspiration. Even after another State was established in the South once it became independent of the United Kingdom on 30 November 1967, and after the revolution of 26 September 1962 in the North, which swept away the reactionary rule of the royalist Imam and replaced it with a republic, the return to Yemen of unity in the form of a single State remained an all-embracing, popular and insistent demand. Our people never accepted that the separation should continue once its national soil had been liberated from the yoke of occupation. They persisted in refusing to accept that abnormal situation and in resisting it by every means. Each of the two former Yemeni States adopted a name which emphasized the fact that it belonged to one State called Yemen. Their rejection of partition led each of those States to refer to the other as its "other half".

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Awareness of this strength of feeling among all our people in support of the unity of Yemen and of their rejection of partition made the successive leaders in both Sana'a and Aden spare no effort in vying with each other and pressuring each other on the question of unity. This led to two outbreaks of hostilities between the two parts, the first in 1972 and the second in 1979 and, throughout,

tension and conflict between them persisted and continued to flare up from time to time.

However, developments since the beginning of 1986 — starting with the tragic civil strife between the partners in power in the South and the comrades of the Socialist Party, the sole ruling party, followed by the policy changes in the Soviet Union culminating in the fall of regimes in the countries of what used to be called the socialist, or Eastern, bloc and, finally, the end of the cold war — all this created the right conditions for re-uniting Yemen.

Another factor was that the regime in the South, which had been tightly linked to the Soviet Union and its socialist-country allies, found itself unable to oppose internal and external enemies without strong international backing. It was therefore possible to agree to unite the two halves of the country on 30 November 1989, during President Lieutenant-General Ali Abdullah Saleh's visit to Aden on the twenty-second anniversary of the South's independence, and to persuade the then ruling Socialist Party leadership to accept unification.

On 22 May 1990 unity was peacefully and voluntarily established in the form of a single State called the Republic of Yemen, a Republic based on democracy and pluralism. The first general parliamentary elections were scheduled to take place at the end of a period of transition of two and a half years, during which time Yemen was to be governed jointly by elements drawn from the leadership of each of the previous two "halves" of the country. However, as time passed and the agreed date for the scheduled parliamentary elections drew near, some high Government officials from the leadership of the Socialist Party — the other governing partner at that time — began to create problems and crises in order to prevent the holding of elections on the agreed date. As a result, the elections were postponed from November 1992 to 27 April 1993.

The elections, when they finally took place, were indeed free and fair, as was attested to by all those who took part in monitoring them. Those monitors included representatives of States, organizations and institutes concerned with democracy and the protection of human rights and freedoms, side by side with journalists and correspondents from Arab and non-Arab news agencies. In an editorial published at the time of the elections, *The New York Times* described them as

> "a true revolution in the furthest part of the Southern Arabian peninsula".

Despite the fact that the results of the election gave the General People's Congress, under the leadership of His Excellency President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Chairman of the Presidential Council at that time, the sole right to form a Government, the President and his party favoured a coalition with the other two important parties: the Islah party, the Yemeni Alliance for Reform (YAR) and the Yemeni Socialist Party. This was inspired by a genuine desire to strengthen the bonds of national consensus, to guarantee secure foundations and support for the successful establishment of national unity, particularly in its early stages, and to guarantee continuity and survival for a democratic experiment which was still in its cradle. They also aimed at preventing conspirators and opportunists from having any leeway to exacerbate disagreements or provoke armed conflict.

Only a few weeks after the formation of the coalition Government, on 31 May of that year, while the freely and directly elected Parliament was preparing to carry out its work and discharge its duties, there began to appear certain indications that a suspect plot was being hatched. It was clear that elements of the leadership of the partner in the governing coalition, the Socialist Party, who held important positions in the constitutional institutions and, more precisely, in the Presidential Council and the Cabinet of Ministers, were behind the plan. The prevailing belief was that the matter was nothing more than an attempt to exert pressure in order to extract more concessions and a bargaining chip they used to obtain more government posts or, in the very least, to maintain positions in the Presidential Council when it was re-elected, if that was decided. Again, it could have been an attempt to secure the post of Vice-President of the Republic if the form of the Presidency of the State was going to be changed from a Presidential Council to a republican presidency. Naturally, the results of the general elections did not suit the ruling elements of the Socialist Party, despite their sharing in power and the important leading positions they held. That was perhaps due to their addiction to being the sole ruling centralized totalitarian authority, their love of ruling without partners and the fact that they lacked belief in the country's unity, and had no deep-rooted confidence in democracy, political pluralism or in free direct elections.

Suddenly, without any reason or justification, in accordance with a carefully planned time-table, those elements created a political crisis, and matters reached the point where an attempt was made to ruin or at least to paralyse the institutions and apparatus of the State and to usurp the constitutional legality derived from the will

of the people through the ballot box and replace it with a legality derived from decisions taken as result of dialogue between different parties. Those conspiring elements were not satisfied with that, despite the grave risks involved. Rather, their arrogance and disregard of legality were carried to the point of wanting to impose their tutelage over the people and to impose an undeclared partition through the continual use of an iron-fist policy and absolute control over a number of Governorates, which they used to rule by force and oppression in the days before unification.

Despite all the generous concessions that continued to be made from time to time by the leadership of the majority, under the direction of His Excellency President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was at that time Chairman of the Presidential Council, the elements bent on separatism stepped up their challenge and their disregard of constitutional legality to the point of triggering hostilities in the hope of bringing Arab or international forces to separate the combatants and force each side to withdraw beyond the old borders dividing the two halves. Their aim was to put an end to unification, to declare another separate State on part of the territory of the homeland, and thereby to revert to the situation that existed before 22 May 1990.

However, our people stood behind our armed forces and security forces, whose loyalty set them squarely on the side of legality. Those forces were able to turn the fighting decisively in favour of unity and democracy, and by so doing were able to abort the suspect plot and to maintain Yemen as the unified single State it has been throughout its long history.

Today, Yemen has regained its stability and ensured its security, after that ordeal, and has put an end to sedition. A general amnesty has been declared, and national reconciliation has been achieved. Those who fell prey to deceit and disinformation have returned to the nation to participate in political life, and they benefit from the spirit of tolerance which characterizes the political leadership of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Here I should like to emphasize to you and to the Secretary-General that no harm has befallen any of those people and that none of them has been put on trial. Most of them have gone back to their normal lives quite naturally. That was not all: the Socialist Party itself spontaneously elected a new leadership which contained many elements of the former leadership, and went back to participating in political activity in complete freedom. Its representatives in parliament participate in parliamentary life just as they did before.

Within the framework of the leadership's attempts to ensure the success and continued progress of our democratic experiment, and in order to expand the basis of popular power sharing, the elected parliament, on 27 September 1994, unanimously passed a number of constitutional amendments which provide for the introduction of a local governmental system based on the principle of free and fair elections. They also decided to create a consultative council to be established by republican decree from experienced and highly qualified personalities from various regions of Yemen to widen and expand the basis of representation and opinion.

Last Saturday, 1 October 1994, the Chamber of Deputies — again in complete freedom — elected Lieutenant General Ali Abdullah Saleh President of the Republic in accordance with the amendment approved by the Parliament regarding the organization of the national presidency, which was amongst those constitutional amendments.

Our choice of the democratic option based on political and party pluralism was not the result of pressure from any side, rather it was motivated by our conviction that democracy is the best contemporary method of government. It represents the path leading to development, progress, security and stability. However, the continued success of our democratic experiment remains subject to economic growth. That requires an end to the economic war that continues to be waged against our country. This is a war which takes many different forms, including the closing of markets in other countries of the region to our agricultural and industrial products. We therefore appeal to all our brethren in neighboring countries to lift all the barriers and remove all the obstacles to free trade and the movement of locally produced goods as an important step towards the normalization of relations, and the strengthening of brotherly ties and regional cooperation.

As an extension of the national reconciliation process which we have begun to implement within Yemen, despite all the events which have taken place, hand in hand with that and in the same spirit, we call upon all neighboring countries to respond positively to our sincere initiative, to end the causes of dispute and resume normal relations, which will strengthen security and stability in the Arabian Peninsula region, based on good-neighborliness, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs. The Republic of Yemen has an important geographical and strategic position, as represented by its control over Bab al-Mandab, and the

Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, which meet in its territorial waters in the Gulf of Aden. The Republic of Yemen is aware of its responsibilities and of the importance of the role it plays in the maintenance of security and stability in the Arabian Peninsula region, of the Gulf in particular, and the world in general.

In this context, we would like to appeal to the Security Council to lift the sanctions which are still in place against Iraq after such a long time, as the justifications for such sanctions no longer exist. The suffering of the Iraqi people has reached intolerable levels. Insistence on maintaining such measures will lead to deepening enmity and hatred between the States of the region. It is necessary to turn a new leaf and have recourse to dialogue in order to ensure the security and safety of all sides concerned, in a spirit of love and fraternity, and on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty and legal rights of every party.

On the basis of our membership in a wider nation, we feel impelled to appeal to the Security Council to review its resolutions against Libya, our sister country, and accept the reasonable solutions put forward by the Arab League, which include the trial of the Lockerbie suspects before an international court, in accordance with the law of Scotland.

With regard to the three islands disputed by the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, we would like to ask both countries to work towards resolving this dispute between them through dialogue and mutual understanding based on respect for legitimate rights in accordance with legal evidence.

It is very important indeed that cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the League of Arab States should be strengthened, in the interests of the Arab world in particular, and of the rest of the world in general.

The Middle East peace process has so far achieved an agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel on the one hand, and Jordan and Israel on the other. However, a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region remains linked to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Golan Heights and South Lebanon, the renunciation of the logic of power by the Tel Aviv government, and its acceptance of an independent Palestinian State in Gaza and the West Bank, including Holy Al Quds.

We cannot forget our beloved brotherly Sudan. We underscore the need to respect and safeguard its unity and call for commitment to help it maintain that unity both on the territorial and the human levels.

The fact that our sister country Somalia remains in the grip of fragmentation, anarchy and fighting, is deeply distressing to us and makes our hearts bleed. We will do all we can to help our neighbour and its fraternal, Arab, Muslim people to emerge from its terrible trial, by participating with other fraternal countries in the Committee which it was decided to form by the last session of the Arab Foreign Ministers which was held in Cairo. We hope this Committee will receive the cooperation of the United Nations.

It is also a cause of deep sorrow that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a target of terrible aggression and continuous shelling by the Serb aggressors, while the world does nothing but make statements and threaten to take measures which have yet to materialize. Perhaps the least that could be done as a first step towards showing some determination in the face of Serb persistent disregard for peace and security in that important region, their trampling of the resolutions of international legality, would be to immediately lift the arms embargo and to begin to supply arms to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to enable them to defend themselves against aggression.

We have become ever more convinced that right will triumph over injustice, the same as the people of South Africa have done by eliminating apartheid and racial discrimination following such a long arduous struggle. We would like to express our happiness at seeing this new African State among us. We should also like to express to the pioneer of freedom fighters, President Nelson Mandela, our appreciation and respect. May we wish him all success and progress in leading his country, particularly after leading his people a phase of struggle with courage, resistance and steadfastness.

It is important to mention here before concluding my statement, that the accusations against Islam and judging Islam from the point of view of certain acts of terrorism taking place here or there because there are others who are not Muslims who perpetuate acts of terrorism in various parts of the world without having any accusations levelled against their religions or their creeds. We therefore believe that we should all stand against any attempt to distort the concept and image of Islam and against any allegations against it because Islam

is a religion which rejects violence and terrorism, a religion that calls for love, coexistence and peace.

In order to show its respect and appreciation for the United Nations, the Republic of Yemen has formed a national committee to organize celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this international Organization. We want our celebrations on this occasion to reflect the importance we attach to it.

We should not miss the opportunity to refer also to the importance of working to enlarge the representative base of the Security Council, so as to take into consideration the international changes that have taken place since the establishment of the United Nations. One of the most important of these is the emergence of two major economic powers - Japan and Germany. They should join the Security Council as permanent members. There should also be just, permanent representation of regional groupings, including the Arab region.

Finally, we hope that the fiftieth anniversary of this Organization will be an incentive for renewing the vitality and effectiveness of the United Nations, and an intensification of its role, in order to achieve the aims of the Charter in the light of the needs and requirements of the new international changes.

The President: I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Mr. Abass Chernor Bundu.

Mr. Bundu (Sierra Leone): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate Mr. Amara Essy on his election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. His remarkable talent and consummate experience assure us that we can feel proud and confident as he discharges his new functions admirably and with distinction. His leadership of the Assembly confers dignity on Africa, on West Africa and on his country, Côte d'Ivoire, with which Sierra Leone happily enjoys excellent bilateral relations and shares a common West African identity. We extend to him an abiding wish for his success.

To Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, his immediate predecessor, I convey my delegation's gratitude and appreciation for the commendable manner in which he performed his duties as President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The approach adopted by the Secretary-General of our Organization since he assumed office has been exemplary in many ways. He deserves high tribute for his untiring efforts over the past two years, especially in the realms of the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of development.

The world is still in transition. Although the outcome of the process of transformation is not easy to predict with any degree of certainty, it is nevertheless clear that the world will continue to be preoccupied in the next half-century with problems carried over from the last - problems concerning the promotion of development, especially of the least developed countries; the maintenance of peace and security; and the consolidation and strengthening of the process of cooperation and integration between nations. These are among the major challenges of our time.

Developmental and political issues now occupy a larger part of our global, regional and national agendas, and the past 12 months have been no exception. In some cases, these developments have been a source of joy and satisfaction; in others, the stigma of shame and disgrace has loomed larger.

On the economic front, the slow, uncertain and unbalanced growth of the economies of developing countries generally has been a source of grave concern. This is evidenced by the alarming increase in the number of peoples living in absolute poverty, stagnating resource flows, dwindling direct foreign investment, reduction in export earnings, excruciating debt crises, rising unemployment, especially among the youth, and environmental degradation.

The persistence of these problems could easily undermine the stability of the world economy and pose serious threats to international peace and security. Immeasurable work has been done to redress the economic stranglehold in which most of our countries find themselves. A lot more, however, needs to be done by the developed countries and the international financial institutions to prevent many of the world's poor countries from being completely submerged by the heavy burdens imposed by the present international economic system. More specifically, new, additional resources, at both the multilateral and the bilateral levels, need to be provided by our development partners if any improvement in the lives of the teeming millions in the third world is to be assured.

The situation is even more acute for my country, which is in the throes of a rebel war and implementing a

substantial economic reform programme as well as a political transition programme — all three activities taking place simultaneously. Hardly any other State member of the Assembly shares this unique experience. Given the increasing interdependence and globalization of the world economy, the massively deteriorating economic situation of the developing countries and, in particular, the uniqueness of the plight of Sierra Leone deserve the full and urgent attention of all the members of the international community.

Poverty and the decreasing living standards of the majority of our people are at the heart of our problems. To alleviate these problems, my Government has embarked on courageous, wide-ranging and far-reaching socio-economic reforms, including the deregulation of prices and exchange and interest rates, and the reduction of fiscal deficit. The pace and scope of these reforms, however, contrast sharply with the very modest results achieved so far. Despite considerable success in securing short-term macroeconomic stabilization, the reforms appear to have neither removed the structural constraints facing the economy nor improved supply capacity. We are now resolved to ensure that future adjustment programmes are designed and implemented in a manner that takes due cognizance of the special needs of the vulnerable groups of our society as well as the social requirements of development.

Those are just some of the difficult tasks ahead. They are made no less formidable by the new challenges posed by the Uruguay Round agreements signed at Marrakesh last April. My Government welcomes the new agreements, but would stress the need for continued evaluation of their implementation to ensure expansion of world trade for all countries, improved market access and adequate protection of the interests of the least developed countries in particular. Any attempt, therefore, to impose new conditionalities, encompassing environmental and labour conditionalities in this context, must be strongly resisted.

In the meantime, the observation is inescapable that the Marrakesh agreements pose a real danger to trade preferences previously assured developing countries; this can lead to a loss in export market share and export earnings. Moreover, countries that are net importers of food face the prospect of higher food-import bills arising from the liberalization of trade in the agricultural sector. There is therefore a need to address without delay the question of how the adverse consequences of the Marrakesh agreements can be mitigated through enhanced trade preferences, assistance and compensation.

The external indebtedness of developing countries poses the biggest impediment to their development. A permanent and comprehensive solution must therefore be found without further delay. That is why we commend the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, His Excellency President Soeharto of Indonesia, for taking the initiative to convene in Jakarta last August a ministerial meeting of non-aligned countries on debt and development, with the theme "sharing of experiences". That high-level meeting on the debt crisis of developing countries, which I attended together with Ministers from twenty-five heavily debt-distressed, least-developed countries, endorsed a number of general principles for debt reduction, which represent a significant step in the search for a lasting solution to the debt problem. We therefore urge the United Nations and the international community to adopt the principles contained in the report of the Jakarta meeting, submitted to the Assembly by Indonesia.

Calling upon the international community to pay special attention to the problems of developing countries is not a proclamation of abdication of responsibility. In Africa, for example, we have accepted that the key to sustainable development is in the hands of Africans themselves. The African leadership must therefore demonstrate a determination to stay the course of appropriate economic reforms and improvement in governance. We do emphasize, however, that the international community must play a crucial supportive role in the creation of the environment necessary to guarantee sustainable growth and development of developing countries in ways that include the provision of adequate levels of concessional, financial and technical support for infrastructure and national capacity-building on a continuous, predictable and assured basis.

The issues I have raised will no doubt be on the agendas of certain conferences slated for the coming year. The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, March 1995, will provide an opportunity for all of us to focus on such matters as socio-economic developmental challenges, the adoption of a global strategy for poverty eradication, the generation of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration — in all of which the needs of people will occupy centre stage. The situation of women and the need to integrate them better in the development process as agents and beneficiaries of development will also receive attention at the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be convened at Beijing in September next year. This Assembly, for its part, is convening a

high-level intergovernmental meeting to conduct a mid-term global review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in the 1990s. Naturally, my delegation holds high expectations that the recommendations and conclusions of these meetings will make substantial contributions towards creating the climate necessary for enhancing the socio-economic conditions of developing countries.

In the same vein, my delegation commends the timely initiative of the Secretary-General in submitting "An Agenda for Development" pursuant to the resolutions of this Assembly. It provides us with another historic opportunity to address the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment of the developing countries in a holistic and comprehensive manner. We urge the Secretary-General to make concrete, action-oriented recommendations for the enhancement of the socio-economic conditions of these countries and to suggest practical measures for their implementation.

Turning now to the environment, my delegation is concerned at the general response to the recommendations, decisions and commitments of the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development, held over two years ago. True, some progress has been recorded since that Conference. What is missing, however, is a clear commitment on the part of the developed countries to provide financial and other relevant resources for the implementation of Agenda 21. We in the developing world are committed to implementing Agenda 21, but this commitment will remain illusory unless it is complemented by adequate human, financial and technical resources.

On the world political scene too, the picture that we see concurrently inspires hope and engenders desperation. Without a doubt, the holding of the first pluralistic, non-racial, democratic elections in South Africa, in April this year, and the subsequent installation of a Government of national unity, marked a major achievement not only for the people of South Africa but also for this Organization. The patient and dedicated struggle of all peace-loving South Africans to resolve peacefully the abominable policy of apartheid, aided by the committed solidarity of the world at large, has been amply rewarded.

In taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, formally to welcome South Africa back into this world Assembly, I wish to reiterate our commitment to work together with the new Government to make our continent a better place for all of us. Theirs has been a long and arduous journey through dark and difficult times that tested both courage and faith. The presence of the South African delegation here today is a confirmation of man's ability to rise above those conditions that threaten his survival and to resolve them peacefully, though they may have originally appeared insurmountable.

There are at least three lessons to be learnt from the South African experience:

First, with South Africa's freedom, the non-white peoples of that country, and indeed everywhere, are enabled to regain their lost humanity. While apartheid existed, its stigma touched many, even beyond that country's borders. Yet, with that policy's banishment from the South African landscape, this Organization should now rekindle its sense of purpose to continue the struggle against racial discrimination and segregation wherever they exist.

Secondly, the attainment by South Africa of democratic values under a non-racial Government of national unity should demonstrate to all countries, especially in Africa, that excuses for denying a similar transformation to our own societies are now untenable.

Thirdly, the fact that such a man as Mr. Nelson Mandela could emerge from 27 years of imprisonment on Robben Island and, setting aside any bitterness, preach and demonstrate accommodation and national reconciliation should in itself encourage our brothers and sisters in divided societies to forswear retribution and strive instead for tolerance and harmony.

These lessons have not been lost on us in Sierra Leone. We have come to understand and appreciate from this exemplary South African political experience that, where democratic principles are applied in full in the governance of any nation, there is every likelihood that solutions will be found to the political problems of that nation, however intractable they may appear. Conscious of this fact, the Government of the National Provisional Ruling Council of Sierra Leone, headed by His Excellency Captain Valentine Strasser, has unveiled a political reform programme that will ensure the installation of a democratically elected government in our country by January 1996.

With that in view, an Interim National Electoral Commission of eminent citizens has now been constituted, headed by Mr. James Jonah, former Under-Secretary-General of this Organization. Furthermore, as

a result of extensive debates on an initial Working Document put together by a National Advisory Council, the draft constitution has now been finalized and will soon be presented to the people for final approval. Meanwhile, a National Commission on Democracy, which will undertake a programme of mass education to let the people appreciate the values of democracy and their rights and duties as citizens, will soon be appointed. All these steps are designed to underscore the commitment of my Government towards the full restoration of democracy in Sierra Leone by the end of 1995. Let me assure this Assembly that the Government of the National Provisional Ruling Council remains fully committed to the transition programme, which continues to be on course. We look forward to the cooperation and assistance of the international community in enabling us to realize the programme's objectives.

Allow me at this point to recall the adoption by the General Assembly last year of resolution 48/196, entitled "International assistance to Sierra Leone", and our continued expectation for the full implementation of its provisions. We are appreciative of the assistance extended to Sierra Leone so far by the international community, especially in the humanitarian field, and look forward to its continuation and increase in the future.

Yet, as promising as the nation's prospects are, it should not be forgotten that we are engaged in a rebel war whose origins are inextricably linked to the Liberian conflict, and whose consequences are still visible in the large number of refugees and internally displaced Sierra Leoneans, who now total an estimated 300,000 and 400,000 respectively. Further, the untold devastation of the country's economically productive areas continues to undermine an already fragile economy.

My Government realizes that even though our meagre resources are now committed to bringing this rebel war to an end, we must necessarily look forward to the reconstruction of our country and its economy, a task whose success will be greatly enhanced through collaboration with the United Nations system, especially in working out a programme for the rehabilitation of the devastated areas and the resettlement of our refugees and displaced citizens. To this end, we have already laid the foundations for the expeditious rehabilitation of these areas upon the conclusion of the war, by setting up a National Rehabilitation Committee that will oversee our efforts in this matter.

While, as a Government, we continue with reluctance to pursue the military option in prosecuting this war — and we wish to record here our appreciation to all friendly Governments, particularly Nigeria, Guinea and the People's Republic of China, for their assistance in that effort — let me say here and now that no option is foreclosed. We remain amenable to any option, military or non-military, that will secure a speedy conclusion to this untenable situation, thus ensuring the creation of an environment conducive to the holding of the elections anticipated in our transition programme.

The success of these undertakings and of others in my Government's transition programme depends largely on the progress that is made in restoring peace to Liberia, hence our deep concern about developments taking place across our border. It is in this connection that we renew our commitment to the Cotonou accords and reiterate that they contain the essential elements for the resolution of the Liberian conflict, namely the disarmament of the warring factions, leading to the holding of elections. Drawing from the experience in Angola, it is clear that without such disarmament, peace in Liberia will be tenuous at best. We therefore call on the United Nations and the international community to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) financially, logistically and otherwise in order to reinvigorate the peace process and ensure that disarmament gains renewed momentum.

Given our own refugee situation, we are gravely concerned about the increasing flows in the world refugee population, about half of whom are children, whose needs should be met through appropriate measures of protection and assistance. This International Year of the Family therefore provides an excellent opportunity to focus attention on the essential needs of refugee children. In contemplating concrete measures to be taken by the international community in addressing this phenomenon, it is essential that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child be fully implemented.

As crucial as these measures are for mitigating the global refugee problem, we remain convinced that, unless and until the international community overcomes the scourge of poverty and political strife, this problem will remain constantly with us. It is our fervent hope, therefore, that a renewed impetus will once again be found to prevent and eradicate this condition of boundless human misery.

Looking beyond the borders of our region, Sierra Leone acknowledges the signing of the Washington Declaration by Israel and Jordan, ending the state of war

between the two countries. We see this as a continuation of the peace process that started three years ago and that led to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is a positive development, coming after the assumption of Palestinian self-government earlier this year, and anticipates the eventual attainment of comprehensive peace among all concerned parties in the Middle East.

In this connection, my Government would like to commend the role of the United States and Egypt for their relentless efforts in bringing together Israel and its Arab neighbours. We urge Israel on the one hand, and Lebanon and Syria on the other to intensify their efforts and display the spirit of accommodation that had underpinned successes in other areas, so as to make the important objective of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East realizable within the shortest possible time — in the interest not only of the people of the region, but of the world at large.

With regard to the dispute between Kuwait and Iraq, we call upon Iraq fully to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait in accordance with the terms of the resolutions of the Security Council.

We would also hope that in other areas, such as Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there will be progress in bringing to an end the present unacceptable stalemate. While the absence of progress may be frustrating, we nevertheless believe that it would be a tragic mistake even to contemplate disengagement from peace-keeping operations in Africa at this crucial stage.

By far the most appalling situation that the international community has had to confront recently is that in Rwanda. We will not readily forget those graphic images of death, abject misery and destruction, or soon overcome the torment and challenges that our collective conscience has had to face. It is hard to explain and harder still to understand how those dark days from April to July could have taken place in this century in full view of the world. That such a tragedy occurred at all points to the failure of existing international mechanisms for responding to such devastating situations.

Drawing from the Rwandan experience, the time has come for all of us, but more so for us in Africa, to come to terms with the diverse nature of our societies and realize that the denial by any group of the right of another group or section to participate in the life of a nation is indefensible and ultimately self-destructive. Peaceful coexistence of heterogeneous communities and power-sharing within a nation are great values we must all uphold.

Further, we believe that painful admissions must be made. A few years ago, when the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) was deployed in Liberia, much criticism was levelled against it. We were accused of harbouring ulterior motives against that country and of encouraging intervention. Yet, looking back, none will deny today that by its deployment ECOMOG averted a similar tragedy in Liberia. Concerted action by West Africans brought that country back from the brink. Today, ECOMOG represents Africa's flagship in preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peace-building and peace enforcement. We call on States in Rwanda's region to reassert their lead role in the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Rwanda. We believe that in the realm of maintaining regional peace and security, regional arrangements have an important role to play, as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. This has been recognized by the exemplary collaboration between the United Nations and ECOWAS on the Liberian situation.

In this context also, the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution deserves the fullest support of the United Nations system and the international community. We are therefore deeply encouraged by the positive resonance of some members of the Security Council in that connection.

We must at this point applaud the action of the French Government in Rwanda at a time when this Organization seemed completely paralysed. We believe that the French action, which undoubtedly brought a glimmer of hope to a situation that was palpably so catastrophic and which prevented a second Goma, is worthy of special mention by all peace-loving nations.

We also commend the efforts of the Organization of African Unity. What is now required to stabilize the situation even further is the provision of full support for the African and other troops that have been or are about to be deployed in Rwanda. We also call upon the present Rwandan Government to continue to take all measures necessary to restore peace and reconciliation to their country.

Though we must all learn the painful lessons of the Rwandan experience, it is essential that those who played

a part — any part at all — in visiting such horror on the people of Rwanda be held fully accountable for their crimes. In this connection, my delegation fully supports the establishment of a special tribunal to bring to justice those responsible for what can only be described as genocide. We expect that the Commission of Experts will continue to collect all available evidence to make for a speedy conclusion of this shameful episode.

In a similar vein, we expect that the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 will soon begin the process of examining the available evidence in order to bring the perpetrators to justice. The international community has an obligation to ensure that such callous indifference to human life and the deliberate commission of acts of atrocity, wherever they occur, do not go unpunished. The time has come for a strong message to be sent to all who may presume that no consequences will follow from such despicable behaviour simply because it takes place behind national borders.

I wish to declare here and now that my Government recognizes that no true governance can endure if people are separated from and denied the full enjoyment of their freedoms and liberties. Stemming from this recognition, therefore, my Government has embarked on the major task of ratifying, as soon as possible, the remaining-human rights instruments to which Sierra Leone is not yet a party, thus guaranteeing within our domestic law their application to all Sierra Leoneans.

As conflicts go, none on our continent appears more intractable than that in Angola, where more than two decades of devastation have fostered a culture of violence and war. The continuation of this conflict, which has cost the lives of countless thousands of peaceful Angolans, remains a source of pain and anguish to my Government.

Although not much optimism has been evinced, there seems to be some progress in the Lusaka peace talks. With the acceptance by both the Angolan Government and UNITA of the comprehensive package put forward by the Secretary-General's representative, there is now renewed hope that the talks will soon yield the desired result of a durable solution. My delegation welcomes this development and would like to encourage both parties to the conflict in Angola to allow the will of the Angolan people to prevail over the barrel of the gun.

On the positive side, in a year that has been as volatile as this one, the knowledge that general elections will soon take place in Mozambique is cause for satisfaction. We call upon the people of Mozambique to seize this opportunity to firmly demonstrate faith in their own ability to resolve finally the many years of conflict they have endured. Africans everywhere, I am sure, will give their blessing as Mozambique embarks on the path to durable peace and reconciliation.

Among the many ills that afflict our world today, few are more inimical to the common good than the alarming resurgence of racism and xenophobia. Our concern is heightened even further when we recall that it is scarcely more than 50 years ago that the world witnessed the worst manifestations of racial discrimination. Back then, passions were inflamed by those who argued falsely that the presence of so-called foreigners was injurious to the economic well-being of the State.

Today, this nefarious argument is once again gaining ground among bigots who see immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from other countries as targets for violence. Surely civilization has come too far to accept this situation. It is for this reason, if for no other, that we believe that the world community should intensify the promotion of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and to ensure the success of its objectives.

To many of us it seems that the socio-economic well-being of our world is under siege from conflicts in many lands, far and near. In the Organization, our approach has been the traditional reliance on peace-keeping operations. Yet, recent experience has shown that this is not always the best option. My delegation maintains the view that the Organization would be better served by committing the greater part of its scarce resources to socio-economic development activities and preventive diplomacy.

Many questions will continue to be asked about the direction that the United Nations must pursue as its fiftieth anniversary dawns. Of vital importance is still the need to encourage and provide for the full participation of all Member States in the work of the Organization. In many ways, we are convinced that the growing incidence of political instability worldwide is a strong advocate of a more efficient, transparent and democratic Security Council — a Council cultivating a

culture that frowns upon a few seeking always to wield dominion over the rest.

There is now a compelling case for the pursuit of the democratic ethic nationally. But it does not and should not end there: it is equally relevant to the international arena. My delegation hopes that the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group, seized of the question of institutional reforms, will gather momentum and will bring these concerns to fruition as soon as possible.

I have adverted at length to our problems, our concerns, our fears and our aspirations, which we believe we all share in this global village that is home to all of us. Over the years, we have striven together to find solutions to a wide range of problems whose impact can no longer be localized. If our journey through the decades has taught us anything, it is that blinding ourselves to the realities of our time, turning away from them, avoiding involvement or seeking solace in inaction provides only momentary consolation or comfort. The quantum leap in transport and communications makes us all our brother's keepers. No longer is poverty merely the affliction of a distant cousin in a far-off land, nor can we successfully shield ourselves from the trials and tribulations of those who may be less fortunate than we are.

The lesson to be learnt from all this is that, as human beings, we have a fate inextricably interwoven, whether we like it or not. Thus, our common endeavour to improve our world should be impelled by a much bolder vision — one that brooks no compromise in combating injustice, be it political, social or economic, and one that seeks to strengthen the pillars of international cooperation, eradicate poverty and address the causes of instability.

These, then, are the challenges before us that a new and revitalized United Nations must pursue with vigour and commitment. "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" not only show that peace and development are inseparable twins but contain the essential ingredients of a new vision of our one world. Let us now give that vision the focus and direction of a better tomorrow.

Mr. Seniloli (Fiji): On behalf of the Government and the people of Fiji, I warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Given his vast experience and his knowledge of the United Nations system, I have every confidence that the current session of the Assembly will complete its work successfully.

I also wish to pay a special tribute to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, for the excellent and efficient manner in which he conducted the business of the Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

Most of the problems afflicting the world community that have been discussed in this Assembly in previous years continue unchanged. A survey of the world scene readily discloses that no region of the world is free from tension; that the economic divide between the rich and the poor continues to widen; that political and social upheavals in many parts of the world are getting extremely difficult and expensive to contain; and that poverty and despair remain the lot of a substantial part of the world's population. There is an urgent need to address these problems in a comprehensive and timely manner. The piecemeal approach that we have adopted so far only tends to plug the hole and does not eliminate the causes. Moreover, our efforts are invariably made after an event has occurred, and often when our conscience cannot bear to see the misery on our television screens. We must devise ways for a more preventive approach to the problems.

Political problems are often a consequence of economic and social problems. The General Assembly's decision at its forty-seventh session to convene a World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen early in 1995 was very timely. While we have seen some significant advances in human rights and democracy in many parts of the world, and positive developments towards reducing the potential for regional conflicts in other areas, the fact remains that in both developed and developing countries new challenges to international peace and security are manifesting themselves under a broad plethora of social development problems. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the increasing growth of poverty and unemployment and the attendant marginalization of peoples.

Annually, between 13 to 18 million people die from starvation, disease and famine. It has been estimated that world wide one out of every five people live below the poverty line. While Governments, in many cases, equivocate on how to solve this problem, the poor increasingly look to the United Nations to find effective, immediate and practical solutions. To ignore this reality is to deny that it constitutes a real source of political instability.

Indeed, the Security council has expressed the view that

> "peace and prosperity are indivisible and that lasting peace and stability require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom." *(S/23500, p. 5)*

These views are buttressed by the prophetic words of the Nobel laureate Ralph Bunche who, as long ago as 1950, said:

> "Peace is no mere matter of men fighting or not fighting. Peace, to have meaning for many who have known only suffering in both peace and war, must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, health and education, as well as freedom and human dignity — a steadily better life. If peace is to be secure, long-suffering and long-starved peoples of the world, the underprivileged and the undernourished, must begin to realize without delay the promise of a new day and a new life."

While these words were uttered in a different context, I would suggest that they encapsulate the whole reason for the social Summit. My Government will actively support and work in cooperation with other countries to achieve the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development.

My Government looks forward to playing an active role in the forthcoming World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing next September. Fiji has always recognized the important contribution of women to society and to the development process in general.

In 1987, the Fiji Government established a Ministry of Women. A Department on Women and Culture, which operates under the purview of this Ministry, carries the responsibility of monitoring improvements in the status of women. It seeks to encourage the private and public sectors to address the needs of women in their policies and programmes. It is also the Government's policy to assign 50 per cent of representation in training, appointments and promotions at all levels of the civil service to women, on the basis of preference and merit. The Government encourages the same in the private sector. I might also mention that all three women members of the House of Representatives in Fiji are Ministers in the Cabinet.

My Government will continue to enhance and uplift the status of women. It is in the process of ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Fiji will also explore membership of the Commission on the Status of Women, in keeping with its policy of strengthening the role of women in the country's national development plans. On the issue of gender equity, it is my belief that in order that the principles enshrined in the first Article of the Charter of the United Nations to be achieved, the equal participation of women in the Secretariat of this Organization, on an equitable regional basis, must continue to be implemented and be given urgent priority.

My country was pleased to have participated in the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados earlier this year. In short, the Conference was convened because of a universal recognition of the problems faced by small island developing States in achieving sustainable development goals. While the Barbados Conference was important in re-emphasizing the special environmental and economic circumstances of small island States, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the Conference was only the beginning of a process. We must now act to implement the Barbados Programme of Action and Declaration.

In this connection, we would urge the international community, and particularly those countries with developed and industrialized economies, to respond to the invitation to enhance and promote human resource development programmes in small island developing countries. Increased technical assistance will enhance the institutional and administrative capacity of small island countries to implement the Programme of Action. One of the ways in which this can be brought about is by the provision of new and additional financial resources in accordance with Chapter 33 of Agenda 21. Unless creative and supportive international responses to the special challenges faced by small island developing countries in planning for sustainable development are urgently stimulated, I fear that their continuing vulnerability to both physical and socio-economic forces will increase. In this context it is opportune to remind the global community to fulfil the commitments it made at Rio some two years ago.

We are on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. My country strongly supports the principles contained in the Charter and I would like to reaffirm our support for the Organization. Over the past 50 years, the Organization has seen many changes. Its membership has increased from 51 to the present 184. With the end of the cold war, it has assumed a more central role in world affairs. There is an ever-increasing demand on the limited

resources of the Organization and, in particular, on its Secretariat. We support the Secretariat and commend the adjustments it is making in order to respond to the changing needs of the international community. We urge the Secretariat to continue to pursue the goals of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. In this regard, my Government welcomes the creation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. We believe this to be an important innovation that will contribute to greater efficiency within the United Nations system. We fully support the continuing efforts to bring about greater transparency and accountability on the part of the United Nations management and institutional structures.

In the same vein, Mr. President, my Government supports the view that it is now time that the current structure and the membership of the Security Council were reviewed. With the very large increase in the membership of the United Nations since it was founded, with the changes that have occurred on the global political scene in recent years, and with the nature of problems that must be resolved by the United Nations, including the diverse facets of economic, environmental and peace-keeping and peace-monitoring issues, we agree that there is now a need to consider an enlarged Security Council with more equitable representation of membership to look at these issues more comprehensively.

In this regard, we welcome the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council (A/48/47) in response to General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, and the recommendation that the Open-Ended Working Group should continue its work. In the event that membership of the Security Council is expanded, Fiji fully supports the membership of Japan, recognizing its important role not only as a valued neighbour in the Asia-Pacific region, but also as a key player in the global economy.

My Government has followed with close and keen interest, meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of an International Convention dealing with the Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel. We consider the United Nations staff and associated personnel who participate in various missions sponsored by the United Nations as an integral and essential part of those missions. We have seen their courage in Cambodia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and other places around the world. If the United Nations is to continue to rely on individual men and women to assist in carrying out the mandates of its various organs, it is only fair and fitting that we should provide them with an adequate level of safety and security. At its last session, the Ad Hoc Committee worked very constructively and made significant progress. However, it is important for the Ad Hoc Committee to conclude its work as soon as possible and we urge that this be done. We have a very real interest in the conclusion of this convention since in as much as Fiji has lost some of its nationals in various peace-keeping operations, and many others have been injured. For us, therefore, peace-keeping has come at a high price. It involves the sacrifices, not only of individuals, but also of the families left behind. But my Government remains unshaken in its belief that the price we have paid and are continuing to pay for our involvement in United Nations peace-keeping operations would have been worthwhile if we have contributed towards making the world a safer place. We owe this to our children and to our children's children.

At the present time, there are at least 1,000 troops from Fiji serving in various peace-keeping operations - in Lebanon, Sinai, Iraq, Kuwait and Rwanda. Only recently we agreed to participate in the regional peace-keeping force in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea. This was in direct response to a request we received from the Government of Papua New Guinea, with the support of the relevant parties in Bougainville. Our participation in the South Pacific regional peace-keeping force for Bougainville is in concert with our other neighbours in the South Pacific, namely Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand. Our participation is also for a specific purpose, and that is to assist the Government of Papua New Guinea and the relevant parties on Bougainville in facilitating a secure environment in which they will be able to hold a peace conference and, through dialogue, achieve a consensus on the future of Bougainville. Let me say that our commitment to peace-keeping is a continuing affirmation of our belief that the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter must be given practical expression. Fiji, as a responsible member of the international community, will continue to play its role in the enhancement of global peace and security.

On the subject of peace-keeping, I want at this time to express my Government's satisfaction at the strengthening of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. I believe that continued innovations in the institutional structure of this Department will be necessary if it is to play a meaningful and effective role in support of United Nations peace-keeping activities.

This year marks an important milestone in the development of the international law of the sea. Fiji was the first State to ratify the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are therefore pleased that, 12 years after its adoption, the Convention will enter into force on 16 November 1994. The Convention represents a historic achievement by the international community. It will establish the rule of law over more than two-thirds of the Earth's surface, and promote its peaceful use. Like many other States, Fiji has already been implementing the provisions of the Convention, through its Marine Spaces Act. Entry into force of the Convention would thus consolidate our claims to the archipelagic waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone. Fiji has always supported universal participation in the Convention. We therefore welcome the conclusion of the Agreement to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the deep seabed mining part of the Convention, part XI. As at the Conference on the Law of the Sea, our delegation, together with other delegations, was pleased to play an active and constructive role in bringing about that important agreement. We have signed the agreement and will become a party to it. We urge all States that have not done so to become parties to the Convention and to the new Agreement in order to achieve the goal of universal participation.

Associated with the law of the sea is the important Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Fish is an invaluable gift of nature to man. However, man's unregulated and indiscriminate exploitation of this vital resource is rapidly depleting or destroying it. Fish is an important national and regional resource and it is a staple in our diet. In addition to other species, some 40 per cent of the world's tuna is to be found in the south-west Pacific region. We are therefore concerned at the long-term impact on these resources and on the marine ecosystem as a whole, if the current practice of uncontrolled fishing, especially on the high seas, continues. The Conference has been organized to address the urgent problems facing us with regard to the conservation and management of fisheries around the world. These problems must be addressed from the perspective of both present and future generations. Fiji therefore strongly supports an effective outcome from the Conference, an outcome that would ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish resources of the seas and oceans. Our delegation, in cooperation with other delegations to the Conference, will spare no effort in working towards this goal. We are grateful for the confidence shown in our country by our election as Chairman of the Conference.

Since the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, we have witnessed positive and constructive developments in the Middle East peace process. It is almost a year now since the Declaration of Principles was signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This was followed by the agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area signed at Cairo in May this year. The recent peace accord between Israel and Jordan, which was signed at Washington last July, was another very positive development. My Government lends its support to the Middle East peace process. In particular, we express the hope that the ongoing bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan and between Israel and the Palestinians will continue. We are also hopeful that the present dialogue between Syria, Lebanon and Israel will eventually lead to further agreements.

I would now like to mention a number of issues in my own region, the South Pacific. One is New Caledonia. While some positive developments have been taking place in New Caledonia in relation to the continued implementation of the Matignon Accords, I believe that there is still a need to accelerate the process of redressing social and economic imbalances in the territory. In this connection, my Government will continue to observe developments in New Caledonia with keen interest in the build-up to the referendum to be held in 1998.

Nuclear issues and transboundary movements of hazardous and radioactive wastes are also of considerable concern to us in the South Pacific region. Fiji has long been a consistent opponent of nuclear testing anywhere and in any environment. Our opposition to such testing is by no means based only on environmental concerns. For hundreds of years, the livelihood of our people has depended on their limited land and on the resources in the marine environment. Fundamentally, our abhorrence of nuclear arms and nuclear testing is based on the belief that there is simply no place for nuclear weapons in our region, or indeed in any other part of the world. In this connection, we have been pleased to note the temporary cessation of nuclear testing in the Pacific region by France, and would urge the French Government to agree to a permanent moratorium on testing in the South Pacific.

Fiji is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that the Treaty represents a unique achievement in the promotion of global peace and security and in the reduction of the

threat of nuclear warfare. The Pacific region has long recognized and embraced the principles enshrined in the Treaty, and these principles are now reflected in the Treaty of Rarotonga, which establishes the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. We would, in this regard, encourage the United States, the United Kingdom and France to accede to the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga as a demonstration of their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and to a ban on testing in the South Pacific.

We are equally concerned about the transboundary movements — and, in particular, about the sea transit through the region — of consignments of plutonium from Europe to Japan. For obvious reasons, we object very strongly to this development and earnestly hope that there will be no more such shipments through the region.

The countries of the South Pacific region are also currently in the process of negotiating a regional convention to ban the importation into the island States of the South Pacific Forum of hazardous wastes and to control their transboundary movement and management within the South Pacific region. My country fully supports this initiative and is actively engaged in the negotiation process. The convention is expected to be adopted in mid-1995. This will further strengthen our resolve to keep the South Pacific region free of radioactive and hazardous wastes.

At the national level, the Government of Fiji has commenced work on the review of the country's 1990 Constitution. The members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Review of the Constitution have already been announced. They have been drawn from both sides of the House of Representatives and from the Senate, and represent all the racial groups in our population. As Chairman of that Committee, the Minister for Foreign Affairs with Special Responsibilities on Constitutional Review, Senator Filipe N. Bole, had a fruitful meeting of the Committee only a few days ago. Last November, the Cabinet agreed to the timetable for the review of the Constitution, following the approval, by Parliament, of the terms of reference of the Constitution Review Commission. Because of the general elections that were held in Fiji in February of this year, the review process has been slightly delayed, but it is expected that the substantive work of the Commission will begin soon after the Commission has been appointed, which will be done shortly.

Fiji has a very small, export-oriented economy that cannot isolate itself from the vagaries of the global economy. We are less able to absorb adverse trends in external economic conditions than are larger and more diversified economies; equally, an improvement in the global economy is slow to be reflected in our own small economy. Like many small developing countries, we are still in the process of gradual recovery following a prolonged downturn that afflicted the world as a whole. Like many countries, we have had to adjust our economic policies in such a way as to give them a more market-oriented approach. This has involved the following fundamentals: less interference with the market; recognition that the Government cannot do everything and that the private sector is the engine for development, which the Government must complement rather than compete with; and the encouragement of, and reward for, entrepreneurship, skills, abilities and hard work. In this manner we are proceeding with the deregulation of the economy to bring domestic prices more closely into line with world prices; restraining the growth of Government expenditure to ensure availability of resources for growth in the private sector; reforming the system of direct and indirect taxation to minimize market distortions and improve incentives for risk-taking and effort; implementing wage policies that recognize the paramount importance of maintaining international competitiveness; and mobilizing all sectors of the community in support of economic expansion. These constitute a package of mutually self-reinforcing policies.

In a world that is economically interlinked and in which we are all economically interdependent, no country, however well-intentioned its national efforts might be, can sustain itself without support and interaction from outside. This is true of large, diversified economies, and it is certainly true for small, isolated economies such as ours. Our internal efforts to create a better economic climate, if not supported by external investments, will not succeed. Nor will they succeed if we are denied or prevented from getting access to markets of more developed countries. Our efforts, therefore, depend considerably on investment from outside and on access for our products to traditional and new markets. In this regard, we express our gratitude to our developed neighbouring countries for the consideration they have given to some of our exports. We believe, however, that in the spirit of regional cooperation and better balance in trade the present arrangements must be further improved.

In our efforts to develop our economy, we also count on the support and understanding of our good friends and partners in our neighbouring region of Asia. We value our increasing contacts and economic relations,

particularly with the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, Malaysia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, and we are confident that these relations will continue to be strengthened in the future.

Our Prime Minister, the Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, greatly appreciated the warm welcome that he received during his recent visit to the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Fiji remains committed to its official relations with the People's Republic of China but also greatly values its trade and economic cooperation with Taiwan. It is our sincere hope that the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, in continued direct talks and negotiations, will be able to reach agreement on a practicable basis on which to strengthen and expand cooperation between them, including cooperation in the international arena.

The establishment of the South Pacific Forum in 1971 was an early initiative taken by Fiji following its independence, together with Australia, the Cook Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga and Western Samoa. The Forum now has 15 members, and it meets at the level of Heads of Government. The Forum originated from the desire of our leaders to develop collective responses on a wide range of regional issues, including trade, economic development, civil aviation, maritime, telecommunications, energy, environmental, and political and security matters.

One significant recent development is the post-Forum dialogue: immediately after a Forum meeting, the Forum island countries meet separately with their more developed trade and economic partners to discuss development priorities and constraints in the region. The post-Forum dialogue partners include Canada, the People's Republic of China, France, Japan, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States. From our perspective as small island nations whose economies, to remain viable, depend to a very large extent on economic ties with these larger and more vigorous economies, we value these discussions and are confident that they will continue.

In a wider context, we of the South Pacific Forum believe that it is important and indeed mutually beneficial for the Forum Secretariat to be more closely associated with the United Nations. For this reason, the Forum members have decided to seek Observer status in this Organization for the South Pacific Forum Secretariat. We urge the General Assembly to give favourable consideration to this request.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express, from this rostrum, the appreciation and profound thanks of my Government and people to the Secretary-General, the staff of the United Nations and its various organizations and agencies for their continued support for, and technical assistance to, our national development, and indeed, for the numerous development projects in our region as a whole. In these times, when valuable resources for development purposes are becoming more and more scarce and difficult to come by, I wish to assure the donors and agencies that my Government will manage and utilize these scarce resources carefully and effectively.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Zacharakis (Greece): My delegation feels obliged, in exercise of its right of reply, to respond to the inflammatory statement made yesterday by the Foreign Minister of Albania.

Greece has always sought to develop good-neighbourly relations with Albania based on mutual respect for sovereignty, for territorial integrity and for respect for human rights and democratic freedoms, in keeping with the fundamental principles of the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Council of Europe.

Greece was the first country to support Albania in every possible way in its process of democratization and economic development. Regrettably, the amicable and supportive attitude shown by Greece has not been reciprocated by the present regime in Albania.

The large Greek minority in Albania, which was deprived of all its rights and endured untold sufferings during the previous regime, hoped that with the fall of totalitarianism it would be treated in accordance with the provisions of internationally recognized instruments pertaining to respect for human rights and to the protection of minorities. However, little has changed: fundamental human rights, especially in the areas of education and religion, continue to be violated in spite of the verbal assurances to the contrary given by the

Albanian Government. These oppressive policies culminated in the arrest and trial of five prominent members of the Greek minority.

May I recall in this respect that on 17 August 1994, the United Nations Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a resolution expressing concern at the violations of human rights and the persecution of members of the Greek ethnic minority in Albania and called upon the Government in Albania

> "to abide by the relevant provisions of the ... international human rights instruments, and to take immediately every measure to ensure that charged persons receive a fair trial ...".

In defiance of these recommendations, the Albanian Government staged a political trial worthy of the darkest days of the authoritarian regime, a parody of the administration of justice, according to unprejudiced observers from international organizations and institutions.

I do not wish to go into the details included in the numerous reports and resolutions presented in this respect by many international bodies. I will simply limit myself to mentioning the report of Professor Andrej Rjeplinski, appointed by the CSCE to monitor the trial, which lists a long series of serious and flagrant irregularities observed before and during the trial, which, I should stress, was conducted according to the penal and procedure code of Enver Hoxha, still valid in Albania.

May I also recall the 29 September 1994 report of the Minnesota Advocates of Human Rights, as well as the letter addressed to President Berisha on 8 September 1994 by the Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, which expressed concern at the conviction of five ethnic Greeks "who were denied basic procedural protection", and called on the Albanian Government

> "to respect the rights of all persons within its jurisdiction to free expression and association without discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin or nationality."

May I finally recall that the European Parliament, in its resolution adopted by an overwhelming majority on 18 September 1994, expressed

> "[concern] at complaints already formulated by foreign observers ... concerning violations of fundamental human rights, ... the accused having been humiliated, imprisoned in inhuman conditions, tortured and deprived of communication ... whereas journalists were victims of insults and brutality and some of them have been expelled".

The European Parliament called on the Albanian Government to immediately release the representatives of the ethnic minority and at the same time requested that the Council bring pressure to bear on the Albanian Government "to fulfil its obligations to the Union and to speed up the democratization process" and "ensure the rule of law".

It is difficult to understand how all these summons and recommendations could be presented to this Assembly by the Albanian Foreign Minister as a source of satisfaction with his Government's achievements in the process of democratization.

Regarding economic assistance from the European Union to Albania, I wish to point out that Greece has agreed to the granting of 15 million ECUs to Albania. It is obvious, though, that this assistance is intended to help the recipient country in the process of democratization and not to encourage it in its oppressive policies. In view of the deplorable event I have just referred to, Greece felt obliged to withhold the granting of this assistance until Albania demonstrates in practice its respect for basic rules of law and democratic freedoms.

Regarding the illegal immigrant workers, it should be noted that in recent years about 250,000 to 300,000 Albanians crossed the Greek border seeking better conditions of life in Greece. This impressive number of illegal immigrants, which is quite out of proportion with the capacities of Greece, is partly due to the tolerance shown for humanitarian reasons by the Greek authorities towards this suffering neighbour people. May I add that the massive flow of remittances sent regularly to Albania constitutes a very important source of income for the ailing Albanian economy, a source which we thought would be duly appreciated.

In order to cope with this problem in an orderly way, eight months ago the Greek Government proposed the conclusion of an agreement for seasonal employment and thus the legalization of Albanian workers in Greece, but the Albanian Government has not even responded. The Albanian Government's attitude was equally negative

to our proposal for transborder cooperation and the prevention of crime.

Faced with this situation, Greece could not but take the necessary measures provided for in its legislation, which is by no means punitive or more severe or restrictive than the legislation applied in such circumstances by other States of the international community.

As to the alleged mistreatment of these illegal immigrants, suffice it to say that when deported they publicly declared to the mass media that their only desire was to return to Greece as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, in view of the limited time allotted for the right of reply, it is not possible for my delegation to refute any single allegation, if indeed they were worthy of being refuted.

I would only like to add a few words concerning the utterly misleading and historically false allegations of the Albanian Foreign Minister with regard to the so-called Albanian minority in Greece known as the Tsamis. The Albanian Minister deliberately attempted to misinform this Assembly by beautifying his case, but he conveniently omitted to say that the Tsamis actively collaborated with the Axis Powers during the occupation of Greece and then chose to follow their Fascist and Nazi masters in 1946 to Albania, where they settled for obvious reasons.

I would not have taken this Assembly's time if the issues that I mentioned were merely bilateral differences between Greece and Albania — but they are not. They are matters of broader interest, particularly to the United Nations, since they relate directly to respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the individual.

In this context, I think Albania, instead of launching unwarranted attacks against Greece and shrugging off its responsibility for the sad state of affairs prevailing in its territory, would do better to take into due consideration the summonses, appeals and advice addressed to it by the international community and to try to ensure the rule of law to the benefit of its whole population.

As the Greek Foreign Minister stated before the Assembly five days ago, Greece would be ready to respond positively to any concrete signs that Albania is willing to abide by its international commitments.

However, the statement of the Albanian Foreign Minister was reminiscent of a bygone era and showed that Albania has a long way to go before it can claim a place in the family of democratic European nations.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates made some unacceptable remarks about the territorial integrity of my country, and he made erroneous claims about the Islands of Abu Moussa, Greater Tumb and Lesser Tumb, which since time immemorial have been part of Iranian territory. He painted a picture of facts, events and developments concerning the islands and relations with Iran which do not stand even the most lenient tests of veracity.

Despite all the polemic on the virtues of dialogue and negotiations with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the fact remains that our Foreign Minister was last in the United Arab Emirates in 1992. The issue was discussed there, and he invited officials of the United Arab Emirates to resume negotiations in Tehran, an offer which still stands. However, the United Arab Emirates has yet to respond to this offer. It has, in fact, opted for a tactic of sensationalizing the issue and exploiting some organizations, without an Iranian presence, to adopt unfounded statements.

Even the statement of the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates this morning clearly shows that his Government continues to refuse to engage in serious dialogue and direct negotiations, in contravention of the United Nations Charter and the rules and norms of international law. It was interesting to note that the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates expressed the previous desire of his Government for direct negotiations with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but he also determined in advance the purpose and outcome of such direct negotiations.

I would like to respectfully submit to the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates that direct negotiation is usually conducted to find a just solution to a common problem and not to guarantee the pre-determined objective of one party. For our part, on behalf of my Government, I announce once again the continued preparedness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resume direct negotiations without any preconditions. The agreement of 1971 is alive and well, and it will be the basis of our common efforts, in the context of direct negotiations, to sort out our difficulties.

My delegation fails to understand the genuine utility of this public exercise that the Foreign Minister of the

United Arab Emirates is inventing, to wit, declaiming sovereignty against parts of the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran in international gatherings, including the General Assembly. Of course, the utility of the statement I am now making in response to the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates is also questionable, except as a means of setting the record straight. We owe it to our people and to history to abandon policies of provocation, irredentism and opportunism. Instead, we should earnestly seek to resolve our differences amicably and dispassionately so as to reinforce mutual confidence and good-neighbourly relations.

Unfortunately, we are not convinced that the officials of the United Arab Emirates have the same approach to problem-solving or perhaps even the same agenda for the region. Their intransigent behaviour and approach in the last few years, particularly their refusal from the very beginning to engage in serious negotiations, and their attempts to have this or that Arab group pronounce itself on the issue are both evidence of our claim that the United Arab Emirates has yet to muster the necessary courage and will to withstand the not-so-tacit pressure and encouragement from within and without the region to maintain the prevailing inertia in the region and possibly even exacerbate the situation.

In our view, certain Governments in the region and beyond are exploiting the situation, cheering on the officials of the United Arab Emirates to gradually adopt an antagonistic approach towards the issue at hand in order to achieve their own short-sighted political objectives. We have no doubt that such an approach will not ensure their long-term interests, the interests of the United Arab Emirates or those of the region as a whole.

My Government continues to be prepared to take up the matter directly with officials of the United Arab Emirates. We are earnest in our invitation to United Arab Emirates officials to come to Tehran to resume serious bilateral talks without any preconditions. This offer has been made on a number of occasions, and, at the risk of being redundant, I announce here in the Assembly, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, that the officials of the United Arab Emirates have a standing invitation to engage in serious talks with a view to resolving the issue once and for all in Tehran. We are prepared to receive their delegation as early as this coming week.

A few days ago — on 26 September — in his statement in this Assembly, my Foreign Minister expounded on the concept held by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the broader issues of peace, security and the perception of threats, as well as on the cardinal importance of general rules of international law, which, of course, include the unacceptability of claims on the territories of others. Respect for these principles and their full implementation are critical for future generations of our peoples in the region to resolve our political differences and begin the real race: the race for development and prosperity, a race in which our region has a lot of catching up to do as compared with other regions.

I do not think that this is the time or place to go further on these issues. However, I would like to confirm to the delegation of the United Arab Emirates the determination of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to enhance the brotherly and good-neighbourly relations between the two countries, which would, among other things, entail avoiding sensationalism and developing the earnest will to resolve differences amicably, two qualities which I assure the representative of the United Arab Emirates he will find in abundance in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al-Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I have listened to the representative of Iran and as I am aware of the limited and precious time at our disposal, I shall be very brief and shall focus on the facts in reaffirmation of what we have said already in our statement this morning.

Allow me to comment on the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Moussa, the three islands of the United Arab Emirates that were forcibly occupied by Iran in 1971, an occupation in the course of which Iran murdered and displaced citizens of the Emirates who inhabited those islands. The historical, documented facts make it clear that the day the Iranian forces landed on the three islands in 1971, there was not a single Iranian national on any of them.

All these are facts which refute the claims put forward by the Iranian Government to justify its occupation of these islands. Since the beginning of that occupation, the United Arab Emirates has rejected this act of Iranian aggression and occupation of its three islands, an act which runs counter to the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. The United Arab Emirates has unswervingly reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty over those islands. Over the years, the

United Arab Emirates has repeatedly expressed its earnest desire and readiness to enter into serious, direct negotiations with the Iranian Government to reach a settlement to the conflict that would put a peaceful end to the Iranian occupation and fully restore the sovereignty of United Arab Emirates over the three islands.

My country regrets the prevarication and procrastination which are still being pursued by Iran with regard to the holding of serious, direct negotiations on the question of the three islands and Iran's insistence on discussing marginal and wholly formal questions that have nothing to do with the essence of the conflict which centres on the issue of occupation and the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three occupied islands. The United Arab Emirates rejects the approach of escalation and the threat of use of military force pursued by the Government of Iran.

It also rejects the steps taken by that Government to alter the demographic character and consolidate its occupation of the islands, the latest of which has been the setting up of an air route between Bandar Abbas and Abu Moussa and the establishment of a desalination plant on that island.

Under the principles of international law the Iranian occupation of the islands cannot alter their legal status or bestow sovereignty on the occupier, however long it may last. My Government has announced its intention of placing the conflict with Iran before the International Court of Justice in order to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the question of the three islands. While reaffirming in advance our acceptance of whatever outcome may ensue from the Court's ruling in this matter, we call upon Iran to respond to our peaceful initiative. It is our belief — a belief shared by the international community — that that initiative is the best means of reaching a just and final peaceful settlement to the dispute and ensuring peaceful coexistence, security and stability in a region that has witnessed many disputes and wars over the past 20 years.

Agenda item 17

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: report of the Fifth Committee (A/49/432)

The President: The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 4 of the report that the General Assembly should appoint Mr. Yuji Kumamaru of Japan as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on 5 October 1994 and ending on 31 December 1995.

May I take it that the Assembly appoints Mr. Yuji Kumamaru as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on 5 October 1994 and ending on 31 December 1995?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.